

HISTORY OF METHODISM
— IN —
NORTH CAROLINA
—
BY W. L. GRISSOM

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HISTORY
OF
METHODISM IN NORTH CAROLINA,

FROM 1772 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY W. L. GRISSOM,
A Member of the Western North Carolina Conference.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY JNO. J. TIGERT, D.D., LL.D.,
Book Editor M. E. Church, South.

VOLUME I.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM IN NORTH
CAROLINA TO THE YEAR 1805.

NASHVILLE, TENN.; DALLAS, TEX.:
PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.
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DEDICATION.

TO MY FATHER, T. A. GRISSOM,
AND MOTHER, MARTHA E. GRISSOM,
THE ONE SO RECENTLY CROSSED OVER THE RIVER,
AND THE OTHER WHO LINGERS IN THE EVENING OF LIFE ON THIS SIDE,
WHO BOTH TAUGHT AND GUIDED MY STEPS IN YOUTH,
AND WHO HAVE BEEN A COMFORT AND BENEDICTION TO ME IN THEIR LAST DAYS,
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is a result of an opportunity and of a conviction. The author had some hours of leisure not claimed by other duties, which gave him the opportunity. The conviction sprang from the realization that a service, such as this is intended to be, had been too long neglected. Much valuable historical material has already been lost beyond recovery, and much that remained was rapidly passing away. Most of the other denominations of the state have been more careful to write and preserve their history than the Methodists. It has been said that the reason we have so little material in the early history of Methodism is that those old heroes regarded duty more than honor and the present good more than future praise. They not only failed to write history, but were negligent in preserving the minutes which were recorded; while the records which were preserved furnish meager material for the historian, as they give only the briefest outline of the deliberations which determined largely the politics and usages of the Church.

Only a few of the early preachers kept diaries, and those who did, as a rule, merely recorded where they preached and the text used. It is just to say, however, that Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee, and a few others are notable exceptions to this rule. These sources are of incalculable value to the writer of Methodist history.

So the reader will see that the writer did not select this work because it was an easy task. For there was little

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material in sight when he began to examine the sources. Still there was a fascination in collecting the necessary data. "Old bookstores" were visited and searched from Boston to Atlanta, while much was obtained from the garrets of many private homes. Time, travel, and expense were not spared to make the collection of material as complete as possible at this late day. Fully realizing the importance of the work, the labor involved, and its responsibility, he has endeavored to portray the spirit and life of early Methodism, praying that every reader may have holy aspirations kindled by reviewing a great spiritual movement that has increased in momentum as the years have gone by. For he felt that the writing of history is the digging up of the past for the instruction and inspiration of the present and future. The archæologists in the last few decades have uncovered many ancient cities that have been buried for centuries, and they are again made to speak to us. So may the lives of the pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina speak to us, and tell us of their self-sacrificing spirit and glorious victories. For they can tell us of a zeal and enthusiasm that is no longer witnessed among us. May the scenes of the early camp meeting pass in review before us, and leave their photographs upon the memories of both young and old. Some one has said that "history gathers for us the treasures of the past, and lays at our feet the experiences, and the accumulations, and the attainments, and the ideals of those who have lived before us." If this be true, the history of Methodism is a rich legacy to all her children.

No apology is needed for giving a chapter to the period of the American Revolution. Here the most decisive bat-

tles were fought. Our preachers were in a more embarrassing position than the preachers of any other denomination; and yet the victory for freedom meant much for Methodism, and made it possible for it to become a great Church and one of the greatest moral and spiritual forces in America.

Neither is an apology necessary for treating some subjects which perhaps more properly belong to a work on the history of Methodism in general, because many of these great movements had their origin in North Carolina. It will be seen in these pages that the first subscriptions to a Methodist school in America were made by North Carolinians; that the first Conference school was erected in North Carolina; that the first Methodist periodical published in America was launched from North Carolina; that the first Discipline in its present form was prepared for the press by a circuit preacher in North Carolina; and that the camp meeting, which gave Methodism such an impetus in its early days, had its origin in North Carolina, and not in Kentucky as is generally recorded.

Much space has been given to the revival feature of Methodism; in fact, its early history is the history of a great revival movement. At first it was little more than a revival of religion. No such times had ever been witnessed in America before the coming of the Methodist preacher as was witnessed about the beginning of the nineteenth century. This revival, started under the preaching of the Methodists, marks an epoch in the history of every Protestant Church in America.

It was necessary in trying to portray the life and times of early Methodism to give the biography of the actors as

far as it was possible. Much difficulty was met in obtaining information concerning many of those old heroes, as there is little known of many of them except what may be found in the General Minutes. They made a record, but it is only recorded in heaven. As we contemplate the sufferings, hardships, and toils of these men of God who have glorified the past and made Methodism what it is, our hearts should be stirred and inspired with a holy purpose to follow them as they followed Christ. Let us rejoice in their heroic efforts and glorious achievements. Macaulay says, "No people who fail to take pride in the deeds of their ancestors will ever do anything in which their posterity can take pride."

As a rule credit is given in the footnotes, with the exception of such data as may have been gathered from the General Minutes. If other authorities are omitted in the footnotes, they will have due recognition in a bibliography that will appear in a later volume.

The author is under special obligation to the following, who have given him encouragement or valuable help in one way or another: Rev. J. J. Tigert, D.D., LL.D., our Book Editor, who has kindly edited the work and written the Introduction; Dr. J. S. Bassett, Professor of History in Trinity College; Dr. Dred Peacock, late President of Greensboro Female College; Dr. C. L. Raper, Professor in the University of North Carolina; Doctors James H. Carlisle, H. N. Snyder, and D. D. Wallace, of Wofford College; Dr. S. B. Weeks, Rev. J. J. Renn, D.D., Rev. C. A. Wood, and others. He also wishes to express his indebtedness to the authorities and managers of the following li-

braries: Greensboro Female College, Trinity College, Wofford College, Randolph-Macon College, Library of Congress, Maryland Historical Society, Methodist Historical Society¹ of Baltimore, the Pratt and Peabody Libraries of the same city, Methodist Historical Society of New York, and the Library of Yale College. All of the managers of these libraries have been very kind in rendering every possible assistance, and sincere thanks are hereby expressed.

W. L. GRISSOM.

GREENSBORO, N. C., October 25, 1905.

¹This collection was the most complete, so far as Methodist history was concerned, of any consulted, and it was burned in the recent destructive fire in that city.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE author's full and illuminating preface renders unnecessary an elaborate introduction. Mr. Grissom's pages give ample evidence of the scope—I might say completeness—of his investigations and of the accuracy of his results. He has given many years of untiring and intelligent search to the collection of his materials. These efforts have resulted in a measure of success so large that the author well deserves, and will receive, a permanent and honored place among those who have consecrated their energies and time to the preservation of the fast disappearing sources of early Methodist history in America. This wealth of material has been utilized in the construction of a worthy and ample narrative of the beginnings of Methodism in North Carolina.

The state has an ecclesiastical history in every way comparable with its civil record: the heroes who founded the Churches of the commonwealth are worthy to stand by the side of the men of King's Mountain and of the Mecklenburg Declaration. If here and there there has lurked a suspicion that North Carolina may have lacked a distinctive character and record—the modesty of her sons suffering their state to be ground, so to speak, be-

tween the upper and nether millstones of Virginia and South Carolina, whose stories have been widely, not to say loudly, heralded—that suspicion is wholly dissipated as worthy historians come forward to tell the story of her heroic achievements. In the ecclesiastical sphere, Mr. Grissom has made a valuable and, as I venture to think, a permanent contribution to the wider recognition of the greatness of North Carolina and her people. The publication of this first volume of well told denominational history should meet with such generous and general encouragement as to insure the rapid preparation and issue of the remainder of the story.

It remains only to add that the proofs of this volume have received careful attention in the Book Editor's office, as well as conscientious revision at the hands of the author. The perusal has been a source of real profit and solid satisfaction to one reader who now takes great pleasure in commending the volume to public notice and especially to the attention of the Methodists of North Carolina.

JNO. J. TIGERT,
Book Editor.

NASHVILLE, 30 October, 1905.

History of Methodism in North Carolina.

CHAPTER I.

A GLANCE AT EARLY CONDITIONS.

NORTH CAROLINA: Location—Topography—Settlement.

INTELLECTUAL CONDITION: First Printing Press—Mail Facilities—
First Schools Run by the Clergy—Newbern Academy Established
by Legislative Enactment—Few Educational Advantages—Scotch-
Irish Presbyterians—Church Schools.

RELIGIOUS CONDITION: First Gospel Sermon—William Edmundson—
George Fox. *Friends*. *Established Church*: Church Established
by Government—First Church Built in Chowan—Rev. John
Blair. *The Baptists*: First Baptist Church in Perquimans County
—Paul Palmer—Meherrin—Kehukee Association—Sandy Creek
—Shubal Stearns—Grassy Creek. *Presbyterians*: Henry McCulloch—
Hugh McAden—Alexander Craighead—David Caldwell—
Fourteen Congregations in 1755. *Lutheran and German Re-*
formed: Mostly from Pennsylvania—Settled in Piedmont Sec-
tion—Settlement of Newbern—Few Spoke English. *The Mo-*
ravians: Germans—Settled in Forsyth—Salem—Salem Female
Academy. *The Methodists*: Methodist Preachers Came with a
Revival—Crowds Flocked Out to Hear Them.

IN order to appreciate the progress that Methodism has made in North Carolina, it is necessary to understand something of its territory and the influences at work here when Methodism was introduced. To draw a picture of conditions existing a century and a quarter ago is no easy task; for if we would know the field fully, advantages and disadvantages, we must know its social, intellectual, and religious condition. Hence merely to glance at these, so that the reader may have in mind the soil where Meth-

odism is to plant, cultivate, and reap, is the purpose of this chapter.

North Carolina is included nearly between the parallels 34° and $36\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north latitude, and between the meridians $75\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and $84\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ longitude west of Greenwich. It is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, on the south by South Carolina and Georgia, on the west by Tennessee, and on the north by Virginia. Its extreme length from east to west is $503\frac{1}{2}$ miles; its extreme breadth is $187\frac{1}{2}$ miles; and its average breadth is 100 miles. Its area embraces 52,286 square miles.

The topography of North Carolina makes an interesting picture. It "may be best conceived by picturing to the mind's eye the surface of the state as a vast declivity, sloping down from the summits of the Smoky Mountains, an altitude of nearly seven thousand feet, to the level of the Atlantic Ocean."¹ It is almost in the form of terraces from the mountains to the sea. In the east we have the Atlantic plain stretching from the seacoast west a distance of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles. Large sections of this plain are almost perfectly level. From the east to the west there is a rise of about a foot to a mile. The western border of this plain, extending through Warren, Franklin, Wake, Cumberland, Chatham, Moore, Montgomery, and Anson counties, marks what at an earlier period of the earth's history was a line of sea-beach. The soil is a sandy loam, and is adapted to the growth of cotton, corn, peas, peanuts, potatoes, and espe-

¹"North Carolina and its Resources," 1896, p. 16.

cially sweet potatoes. The sounds and rivers abound with fish. The swamps, that are quite numerous in this section, are very different in their "characteristic features from an ordinary swamp." Many of them occupy the divides or watersheds, and it is thought that they will be a resource of great value some day.

We now pass the old coast line, spoken of above, and enter the Piedmont Plateau, which comprises nearly one-half the territory of the state. Here we are greeted with a very marked change in topography and in production. Instead of the flat monotony of the east, we see at every step some new charm, in hill or dale; for these scenes of landscape present new beauties to an eye of taste upon which it never tires. These red Piedmont hills, between the plains of the east and the mountains of the west, are unsurpassed as a climate for a great variety of vegetable productions and for health. It produces corn, cotton, tobacco, and the small grains. In addition to these it is celebrated as a fruit-growing section.

Passing on to the west, we come to the mountains. There beauty and grandeur blend together. This section is bounded on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains, which run from the northeast to the southwest, and is on an average nearly four thousand feet in elevation. Approaching it from the east it is steep and rugged, rising from two thousand to three thousand feet above the Piedmont country. From the west it is a low and ill-defined ridge. From here to the western boundary of the state it is mountainous, noted for beauty of scenery and a health-giving climate.

So far as known, no one of the white race had ever entered North Carolina previous to 1584. On a bright summer day, July 4, old style,¹ 1584, the first English anchor was dropped off near its coast. The voyagers landed, and after thanksgiving to Almighty God they took formal possession of this country in the name of the Queen of England. They landed on Roanoke Island. However, there was no permanent settlement of whites until about 1663. It has been generally thought that they came as religious refugees; and while no doubt many came seeking religious liberty, the majority came from purely economic reasons.² Those who understood the grant to the proprietors, which contained the germ of an Established Church, could not have expected to find that religious freedom for which they sought. Many of the early settlers cared little for religion, but they wished to better their condition. The first emigrants settled in the Albemarle section, which was very inviting to every tiller of the soil. England, the mother country, was crowded. They sought the wide and fertile fields of Carolina.

The proprietary government was established by charter in 1665, and terminated in 1729. The total population of the colony at the latter date is estimated to be about ten thousand. "In 1730 the colonial government was estab-

¹In new style of reckoning this was July 16.

²Bishop Cheshire in *Church Messenger*. Colonel Sanders in "Colonial Records," Vol. I., pages 28, 29; and Dr. S. B. Weeks in "Religious Development in the Province of North Carolina," pages 20-31. "Colonial Records," Vol. IV., page 920.

lished under royal authority. George Burrington was appointed governor of the province of North Carolina by the King of England, and the next year he qualified at Edenton, and entered upon the duties of his office."

In considering the intellectual condition of North Carolina at the time Methodism was introduced, it will be necessary to glance at the educational forces in the colony previous to that time. And perhaps no force in this state has been felt more than the printing press. It has done much good, and sometimes when not properly used has done much harm. This educational force was introduced in North Carolina in 1749, by James Davis, from Virginia, who set up a press in Newbern. This paper was a small weekly, and was called the *North Carolina Gazette*. The paper continued six years. On the 27th of May, 1768, its publication was resumed, and continued until the Revolutionary War.

The second newspaper was started by Andrew Stewart, printer to the king, at Wilmington, in 1763, called the *Cape Fear Gazette and Wilmington Advertiser*. This paper ceased in 1767. Stewart's paper was succeeded by Adam Boyd's *Mercury*, which ceased during the Revolutionary War. In 1776 newspapers were printed at Newbern, Wilmington, Halifax, Edenton, and Hillsboro. In 1812 papers were printed at Raleigh, Newbern, Wilmington, Edenton, Tarboro, Murfreesboro, Fayetteville, and Warrenton, but there was no paper west of Raleigh.¹

¹ "History of Journalism in North Carolina," by W. W. Holden, pages 3, 4.

Those of to-day who are in the habit of reading the daily papers can hardly conceive how the early settlers could get along with the newspaper and other mail facilities. For up to 1754 "there were no post routes traversed by mail carriers." As late as 1790, long after Methodism had been introduced into the colony, there were only four post offices in North Carolina, namely, Edenton, Newbern, Washington, and Wilmington. Think of running a paper and sending it out without post offices or mail carriers, as James Davis did in 1749! Letters also must be sent by travelers or by special messengers.

When we think of all our modern conveniences we cannot realize how the people made any progress without them. The uses of steam and electricity were unknown. Their mode of traveling was quite different from the palace car that dashes so rapidly across our continent to-day. Traveling was done on horseback, and the freight, which consisted of the mere necessities of life, was carried on pack horses. Public roads were few. Most of the traveling was done on footpaths from one neighborhood to another. All these disadvantages and many others the early pioneers of Methodism had to face when they entered North Carolina.

There were very few schools in the colony previous to the Revolutionary War, and these were conducted usually by the ministers of the gospel and lay readers.¹ The first churches usually had lay readers to read sermons. The missionaries who came to this country to establish the

¹ "Church History in North Carolina," page 164.

Church knew that in order to have the greatest success education and religion must go hand in hand; and that in order to have a strong, vigorous, and steadfast faith, there must be some intellectual development. Education is necessary to the development of the best type of Christianity. In the early history of North Carolina we find that the Church fully realized this fact, but this idea of education seems not to have gone beyond the pales of the Church.

The government was indifferent to the education of the people, and Governor Berkeley, who dominated the colony of Virginia for more than a quarter of a century, thanked God, in June, 1671, that there were no free schools or printing presses in the colony, and hoped that there might not be in a hundred years.¹ It was just ninety-six years after this when the first school was established by legislative enactment in North Carolina. This school was Newbern Academy, in 1767.² And Martin says in his history that there were but two, those of Newbern and Edenton, at the time of the Declaration of Independence. Education for a long time seems to have been entirely neglected. The government had done practically nothing up to the time that the university was opened in 1795. For at that time there was not a public school in the state. Williamson, in accounting for the neglect of education, says: "The laws that were made to support a religious establishment retained their force; for they were supported by the spirit of party. Learning was neglected because it

¹ "Life of David Caldwell," page 78. ²*Ibid.*, p. 77.

was of no party; no troops enlisted themselves under its banner. Pride or passion were not ready to lend their assistance; and reason, a cool auxiliary, for many years gave ineffectual support." The policy of the government was to keep the people in ignorance, and in this it seems to have succeeded. It was necessary to go abroad in order to secure anything like a liberal education, and this a few of the more wealthy and intelligent did.

There were not many at this period who obtained anything like what we would consider a liberal education. Rev. D. Jarratt, of the Church of England in Virginia, writing from the southern part of that colony in 1750, says that "he had learned the Division of Crops, the Rule of Three, and Practice"; and it is said that his fame for learning had traveled one hundred miles.¹ And no doubt the best educated people in the colony were the clergymen of the Established Church and government officers.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians came about 1740, and began to settle chiefly in the central and western parts of the colony, and with them came a general awakening on the subject of education. They had practical ideas of religion and education. Several schools of a high grade were established, and a general revival of education followed. They soon had schools at Wilmington, Crowfield, Caldwell's School in Guilford county (then a part of Rowan), and at Charlotte. North Carolina is greatly indebted to the Church schools for its educational develop-

¹ "Life and Times of Jesse Lee," by Dr. L. M. Lee, pages 20-23.

ment. From the seed that was sown by these Christian settlers our schools and colleges have grown.¹

The religious condition of the colony will next claim our attention. And in order to find out its religious condition at the time Methodism was introduced, let us give a brief sketch of each denomination occupying the field previous to that date, 1773.

THE FRIENDS.

It is presumed that the first settlers in North Carolina were inclined to the Church of England, if they had any religious inclinations. But the first minister of the gospel to preach in North Carolina was William Edmundson, a Quaker. He was a native of England, and was born in 1627. He was a man of piety, and was very eloquent as a preacher. Mr. Edmundson came to America in 1671, and in the spring of 1672 he made a visit to North Carolina. In his Journal he gives a full account of his visit, which shows that he encountered many difficulties. The following is a most graphic description of a night spent in the forest: "It being dark, and the woods thick, I walked all night between two trees; and though very weary, I durst not lie down on the ground, for my clothes were wet to my skin. I had eaten little or nothing that day, neither had I anything to refresh me but the Lord."² The next morning he reached the house of Henry Phillips, who

¹For a full discussion of education in North Carolina, see "History of Church and Private Schools in North Carolina," by Dr. C. L. Raper.

²Edmundson's Journal, page 67 (edition 1774).

lived where the town of Hertford now stands.¹ Phillips and his wife were converted in New England, and, as they had not seen a Friend for seven years, the sight of this man of God made them weep for joy. By noon they called a congregation together, when Edmundson preached the first sermon known to have been delivered in North Carolina since the destruction of Raleigh's ill-fated colony. The congregation was large, "but," Edmundson says, "they had little or no religion, for they came and sat down in the meeting smoking their pipes." But God blessed his efforts and souls were converted, among the number a Mr. Toms, a justice of the peace, and his wife. By invitation the preacher conducted services at their house the next day. Thus God honored the first gospel sermon preached in North Carolina. Edmundson soon left North Carolina and returned to Virginia.

The second missionary to the colony was George Fox, who came on November 21, 1672. He went by canoe down Bennett's Creek into Chowan River, and after stopping at Hugh Smith's in the western part of the present Chowan county, he went down the river to see the governor, who lived "where the town of Edenton now is." The governor received him kindly. From here he visited Perquimans and Pasquotank, where "the people were tender and much desired after meeting." He says in his Journal: "Having visited the north part of Carolina and made a little entrance for the truth among the people there, we began to return toward Virginia, . . . having spent about eighteen days in North Carolina."

¹Moore's "History of North Carolina," Vol. I., page 20.

When Edmundson made a second visit to North Carolina, in 1676, he found that the Friends were well established. He says, "There was no room for the priests, for Friends were finely settled, and I left things well among them." At the commencement of the Revolutionary War the Quakers had monthly and quarterly meetings in Perquimans, Pasquotank, Orange, Guilford, Johnson, and Cartaret; and in all they must have numbered several thousand members.¹ So we see that the Quakers began to preach in North Carolina just one hundred years before the Methodist itinerant entered the wilds of this colony. But their progress has been slow. At this time they only number six thousand in the state. These are principally in Guilford, Randolph, and Davidson counties, with quite a number in the northeastern part of the state.

"While the Friends are proverbial for soundness of piety, frugality, and industry, they are signally defective in aggressive power, because they reject the active and demonstrative instrumentalities of propagating the gospel. It is a Church of negative rather than positive institutions. Avoiding the show of pomp of ritualistic demonstrations practiced in the Catholic Church, they have run into the other extreme of whispering quietism, that fails to awaken a world sleeping in sinful indulgences. But it is due to the Friends to say that their meekness of spirit, their simplicity of life, their bold and uncompromising hostility to all forms of war, have diffused a very mellow and salutary

¹"Life of David Caldwell," page 8.

influence through society beyond their own Church.”¹ The Quakers are now doing more evangelistic work than formerly; so if Dr. Hudson were writing at present, perhaps he would not make his statements so strong.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

The Established Church of England was the second denomination to do missionary work in North Carolina. The field was said to be unpromising for many years, and to the Episcopal ministers it seemed very near heathenism when the first mission was established. This Church was established by law in the province in 1669. But it only existed in theory up to 1700. For at that time the colony had no Episcopal ministers or churches, while the Quakers, as we have just seen, were well organized, and by the example of their faithful lives and earnest efforts were gathering many within their folds.² The Church of England being established by law, other forms of religion were only tolerated, while the Established Church was the national religion of all the king's dominions.

These early English settlers came mostly from Virginia, and located on the creeks and rivers near the Albemarle Sound. Others crossed over to Bath and along the Roanoke, and settled up the southern parts of the province. This Church had the advantage of all other Churches in that it had the influence of the government behind it.³ But it is now claimed by that Church that this connection

¹Dr. H. T. Hudson in *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, April 19, 1876.

²“Religious Development in North Carolina,” Dr. S. B. Weeks, page 32.

³“Church History in North Carolina,” page 46.

with the state did the Church a great evil; that while the people of the state were nominally her children, and the great men of the state were almost without an exception her own, yet the Church stood helpless, blind, and paralyzed.¹

While this Church was established by the government, the people were not taxed for its support at once, but in November, 1701, the Assembly passed an act constituting each of the four precincts in Albemarle—namely, Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, and Currituck—and also one precinct—Pamlico, in Bath county—parishes, and appointing a select vestry in each. The vestry were employed to lay a tax of not more than five shillings per poll to build churches, buy glebes, employ ministers, etc.² “This tax produced tumults and insurrections among the people.” This was the first religious dissent in North Carolina. It was the beginning of much strife. The Quakers were the leaders in the dissent.

In 1702³ the first church was built in Chowan county, near the present site of the town of Edenton.⁴ The first minister of the Established Church in North Carolina was Rev. Daniel Brett, who came to the colony in the year 1700. It seems that his chief object in coming was not for the glory of God and the upbuilding of the Church, but simply to obtain a support. He accomplished but little for

¹ “Church History in North Carolina,” page 88.

² *Ibid.*, page 52.

³ See Hathaway in “Commemoration of Two Hundred Years of St. Paul’s Parish,” page 24.

⁴ Williamson’s “History of North Carolina,” Vol. I., page 169.

the Church, if anything, but strengthened the cause of the dissenters. "Thus ended in shame and disgrace the first missionary effort made by the Church of England to preach the gospel in North Carolina."¹

In 1704 Rev. John Blair came as a representative of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. He remained only a few months, and his report was very discouraging. Rev. William Gordon and Rev. James Adams began to labor in the four parishes of Albemarle in 1708. They were true and faithful ministers of the gospel. Mr. Gordon remained only a short time, but Mr. Adams labored most earnestly for about three years. He died near the close of the year 1710, after enduring many trials and hardships. Much might be written of the ministers of this Church who labored in the province up to the time Methodism was introduced, but it is only necessary for our purpose to glance at its origin and growth.

In 1741 the following ministers were in the province: Rev. Mr. Gargin, of St. Thomas's Church, Bath; Rev. James Moir, of St. James Church, New Hanover; Rev. Richard Marsden; and Rev. John Lapierre. Rev. Clement Hall began to labor as an itinerant missionary in 1744. Their success was very limited.

The fact that this was the Established Church, and that the law gave it special privileges, caused much opposition from the other Churches. For unjust as it may seem, up to 1766 only clergymen of the Established Church were allowed to perform the rite of matrimony. And after that

¹ "Religious Development in North Carolina," page 35.

time, when performed by others, the law provided that in the growing settlements, along the Yadkin and Catawba rivers, if there were an Episcopal clergyman in the parish he should receive the fee, unless he had refused to perform the ceremony.¹ While it never made rapid progress in North Carolina, yet it is admitted that it had the majority at the time of the Revolution. In 1770 it had been established at Bath, Newbern, Wilmington, Edenton, and in Edgecombe, Halifax, Northampton, Orange, Rowan, Mecklenberg, and Bute counties. The people in the northern counties, from Orange to the seacoast, were almost wholly English, and preferred allegiance to the Church of England.

Since the Revolution the Episcopal Church is a continuation of the Church of England, with some modifications in adapting itself to our free institutions. Its form of worship is very solemn and beautiful, but not calculated to carry conviction to the hearts of sinners and cause them to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Neither have they gone into the "highways and hedges," but confined their labors mostly to the towns. Consequently their growth has been slow.

THE BAPTISTS.

The next religious denomination to enter North Carolina was the Baptist. It is thought by some that the Baptists came as early as 1695, and were scattered in the different settlements of the colony. It is not certainly known at what time or in what number they came, but it is certain

¹ "Church History in North Carolina," page 79.

there was a Baptist Church organized as early as 1727.¹ It was organized in Perquimans county, but for a hundred years it has had its local habitation at Shiloh in Camden county. Paul Palmer, a native of Maryland, was the prime mover in this organization. The church was composed of members from different settlements.

The next organization was at Meherrin in 1729, by Joseph and William Parker, but a house of worship was not built until 1735. The average salary paid for the support of the pastor was about one hundred dollars a year, which was quite liberal at that time, all things considered.

The third church organized was that of Kehukee in 1742, by Rev. William Sojourner, who came from Berkeley in Virginia. It is situated on Kehukee Creek in Halifax county. The Kehukee Association derived its name from this church, and held its first meeting at this place.² Sojourner gave the land upon which the church was built and became its first pastor. It was well located in that it was accessible, and "in the center of population and wealth." Its influence soon extended over a large area. It had a branch church at Sandy Run, which flourished from the first, and at Palecasi, Pleasant Grove, and Counaritsa, which became strong churches. Mr. Sojourner was abundant in labor, and his life, though short, was fruitful. The work which he began at Kehukee extended into Bertie, Hertford, Northampton, Halifax, Granville, War-

¹Dr. Huffman in "Baptist Historical Papers," Vol. I., No. 3, page 167.

²"History of the Kehukee Baptist Association," Tarboro, 1831, page 282.

ren, Nash, Edgecombe, Wake, Johnston, Sampson, and Bladen counties.

On November 22, 1755, another Baptist church was organized at Sandy Creek,¹ in Guilford county, which soon became a center of influence for the Baptist Church in North Carolina. Shubal Stearns, of Boston, labored with a sect of Baptists known as "New Lights" until 1751.² It seems that when George Whitefield visited New England under his eloquent preaching a gracious revival started. Mr. Whitefield did not organize. But his converts were full of zeal and possessed much spiritual power. They were called "New Lights." Many of them were Baptists, while some were Presbyterians. Shubal Stearns and fifteen others came to Sandy Creek (1775), and at once proceeded to erect a meetinghouse. Stearns was installed as their pastor, and the church flourished under his administration; for this soon became a large and influential congregation. Dr. Huffman says, "Great crowds came to hear the preaching, many from remote settlements." They came from Abbott's Creek, thirty miles west; from Haw River settlements; from Rocky River and Deep River, farther south; and from Little River in Montgomery county. It will be seen how the work progressed when it was stated that in less than three years the membership had increased to nine hundred or more.

About the same time that Stearns was organizing in Guilford, the Baptists were organizing at Grassy Creek in

¹Benedict's "History of the Baptists," Vol. II., page 38.

²"History of the Baptists in Virginia," by R. B. Semple, Richmond, 1810, page 3.

Granville and in Bladen and New Hanover counties. So that in 1776, when the Carolina Circuit was formed, and the first Methodist preacher appointed to this territory, the Baptists had established churches in every county of the province,¹ from Rutherford county, which was then the western limit, to Currituck on the east. The number of churches is not definitely known, but Rev. Mr. Devin estimates that there were at least forty in the colony, besides a considerable number of branches which afterwards matured into churches. "The records of Grassy Creek show that there were several branches of much interest under its supervision, which were not regularly organized until after the close of the war. What was true, in this regard, of this church was also true of many others." "In seventeen years Sandy Creek Church had spread her branches southward as far as Georgia, and eastward to the ocean and Chesapeake Bay, and northward to the waters of the Potomac, increasing in seventeen years to forty-two churches and one hundred and twenty-five ministers."

The Baptists were more aggressive than either the Quakers or the Established Church. The great majority of them have been missionary in spirit, and have been full of zeal in spreading the glad tidings to a lost world; and their labors have been greatly blessed. They are still numerous in the state, and are ready to push forward every interest which is for the spiritual uplifting of humanity. These good people had many years the start of Methodism in North Carolina, but from the day that the pioneers of

¹ "Baptist Historical Papers," Vol. II., page 67.

Methodism entered the state, they have vied with them in every good word and work.

THE PRESBYTERIANS.

Presbyterianism was introduced into North Carolina with the coming of the Scotch-Irish and Highlanders. About 1736 Henry McCulloch induced a large number of settlers to settle on some of the land which he had obtained from George II. They came chiefly from the province of Ulster in Ireland, and settled first in Duplin county, but in a short time the whole central part of the state was overrun. Presbyterian ministers soon followed them, coming as missionaries. The first to preach in the province was William Robinson, but James Campbell was the first ordained minister to settle there.¹ A considerable number from the Scotch Highlands entered the colony in 1746, and settled on the Cape Fear, forming a settlement in the midst of which the town of Fayetteville now stands.² There was also another settlement on what was known as the Welch Tract on the northeast Cape Fear near Wellington.³ Williamson, in his "History of North Carolina," says that "in 1749 Neal McNeal arrived at Wilmington with his family and five or six hundred colonists, who settled, some in Anson, others in Bladen, but most of them in Cumberland."⁴ And from 1749, for several years, there

¹ Foote's "Sketches of North Carolina," page 158.

² "Life of David Caldwell," page 88; Martin's "History of North Carolina," Vol. II., page 48.

³ Foote's "Sketches of North Carolina," page 77.

⁴ Williamson's "History of North Carolina," page 79.

seem to have been annual importations. The Scotch-Irish began to settle along the Eno and Haw rivers as early as 1738 and 1739.

Rev. Alexander Craighead was the first Presbyterian minister to settle in western Carolina. He accepted a call at Rocky River in 1758, and he was the only minister of the gospel for several years in all that beautiful section of country between the Yadkin and Catawba.¹ There were Presbyterian settlements scattered over the Piedmont section all the way from Greensboro to Charlotte. Prior to the Revolutionary War, Patillo was preaching in Orange county, Dr. Caldwell in Guilford, McCorkle in Rowan, and Hall in Iredell.

However, the exact strength of the Presbyterian Church at the time the "Carolina Circuit" was formed in 1776 is not definitely known by this writer. We know that they were well established at that time in some of the best sections of the state. As far back as 1755 there were fourteen congregations that were looking to the Presbytery to supply them with pastors.² From this and the numerous importations which were coming to this section, we would judge that the Church had made great progress by 1776. For at that time they were well organized in the Newbern, Hillsboro, Cape Fear, and Piedmont sections. They were among the most industrious and intelligent of the early settlers. They did more at that day for education than any other Church. They did much in the struggle for independence. And after freedom and independence had

¹ Foote's "Sketches of North Carolina," page 186.

² "Life of David Caldwell," page 94.

been obtained, they continued to put forth every effort to enlighten, elevate, and save the people. The Presbyterians and Methodists frequently worked together in revivals in the early part of the nineteenth century. They differed widely, or thought they did, upon the subjects of Calvinism and Arminianism, and during the past century they engaged in many a hard-fought battle upon these questions. Presbyterians had many advantages over the Methodists, and some few over the other Churches in the state. They were grounded in the faith of their religion when they came to the colony. They were well educated, and especially their ministers. Their preoccupation of the field for many years gave them a great advantage over the Methodists. Then they did not suffer from the Revolutionary War like the other Churches, but increased during the war as much as they did at any period afterwards for fifty years.¹ When we consider all of these advantages, we are surprised that they have not made greater progress and growth. When we compare the strength of Methodism to-day with the other Churches that were here long before the Methodist pioneer entered the state, we feel like exclaiming, "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad!"

LUTHERAN AND GERMAN REFORMED CHURCHES.

The Germans who settled in the central and western part of the state were about equally divided between the Lutheran and German Reformed denominations. They were mostly from Pennsylvania, and settled principally on

¹ "Life of David Caldwell," page 249.

both sides of the Yadkin River, in Guilford, Davidson, Rowan, Stanly, and Cabarrus counties. The Scotch-Irish were on friendly terms with these Germans, and settled near by, just to the west of them in Mecklenburg and along up and down the Catawba River.¹

Dr. Bernheim thinks that the Palatines who settled between the Neuse and Cape Fear rivers, and those who founded Newbern, naming it after Berne in Switzerland, were originally members of the Lutheran Church. He shows very conclusively that they did not belong to the Church of England.² They, no doubt, came as religious refugees.

It is very difficult to get the statistics of these early churches. Dr. Eli Caruthers estimates that they had at least twenty churches before the Declaration of Independence. They were mostly organized between 1770 and 1775. Their greatest need, at that period, was preachers; they had but few, and they were not noted for intelligence, zeal, or usefulness.³ The Germans in these settlements were economical and industrious, and among them could be found our best farmers. When they came to North Carolina, very few of them could speak the English language. Some of the old people can still use the German tongue. The ministers preached in both languages for many years, alternating between the German and the English. Their Churches, the Lutheran and German Re-

¹ "History of German Settlements in North Carolina," Bernheim, page 153.

² *Ibid.*, pages 79, 80.

³ "Life of David Caldwell," page 90.

formed, have had a slow growth. They are still few in numbers in North Carolina.

THE MORAVIANS.

The Moravians came in 1753, and most of them settled in what is now known as Forsyth county. Of the thirty thousand Germans who left their own country to seek their fortunes in the New World, only about eighteen thousand settled in North Carolina.¹ And the Moravians constituted only a small proportion of the German population who came to the colony.² They procured a large tract of land from Lord Granville which for the most part was an uninhabited and utterly unknown wilderness. The first settlement was Bethabara, now known as Old Town. Here they suffered many hardships, especially during the first winter. Their Church was necessarily weak at the time Methodism came into the colony. For in 1762 there were only seventy-five in the congregation at Bethabara, and seventy-two at Bethania. They were good people with whom to settle a new country; moral, intelligent, and industrious. And they were not surpassed by any for sobriety and good order.

Salem was selected as their central settlement. The first house in this town was completed in 1769. Here they also built a church, and as early as 1794 a school for boys; and a girls' school was opened in 1802, which was soon known as Salem Female Academy. This school has not

¹Reichel's History, page 19.

²"Life of David Caldwell," page 89.

only been a blessing to North Carolina, but to the womanhood of the entire South. Moravians believe in Christian education, and it is seen in their history from the beginning. They also have the missionary idea, and for this cause they pay more per member than any of their sister denominations. But for some reason they have never grown much in North Carolina.

In the foregoing pages we have tried to show the reader something of the intellectual and religious life of the colony before, and at the time, Methodism was introduced within its bounds. Our space would not admit going into details. But this will suffice to give a glance at the field to be cultivated by this new sect called Methodists that was said to be "turning the world upside down." Enough has been said to reveal the fact that ignorance and wickedness predominated. The principal denominations were here already established, one of them for a hundred years before Methodism entered the territory. Many of the early settlers came with their religious convictions and Church preferences, and at once went to work to establish their Church in the colony. The Methodist preacher came not to represent and build up a denomination, because at that time he only belonged to a society in the Church of England, but his only mission was to preach the gospel to a lost and dying race; and in these pages we wish to follow him in his persecutions, toils, and triumphs. He expected opposition when he preached a present pardon and internal evidence of that pardon, or witness of the Spirit. He knew that the revival fire that so frequently kindled under

his preaching would be opposed and criticised by the clergy of the Established Church. He knew that the "earnest offer of Christ's death and mediation as means available by faith for the salvation of all men, without distinction and without reservation," would seem preposterous, if not profane, to those who had in mind Calvin's "horrible decree." But none of these things moved him. He came and in the name of God set up his banner. These itinerants were opposed and criticised by Churchmen, Calvinists, and Quakers. "Still the people flocked by hundreds and thousands to hear them, and multitudes became the subjects of this strange work. Their plain, earnest, and scriptural appeals to conscience; their solemn and devout manners; their disinterestedness, and extraordinary faith and dauntless moral courage exhibited; and, above all, the wonderful power which attended their ministry, were well calculated to excite attention. And they did excite attention." Private houses, schoolhouses, and the few meetinghouses were soon found to be insufficient to accommodate the immense crowds who came to hear the circuit preacher. Barns were frequently resorted to, but they were too small. Then they went to the groves, "nature's own temples," and erected a temporary pulpit, where the gospel was preached in its simplicity and power, which was frequently followed by the cry of the lost, like the wail of the wounded on some battlefield, while the songs and shouts of the saved were heard to rise in peans of praise to the God of victory.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Origin of Methodism: In America—New York—Maryland. Local Preachers did First Organizing. Joseph Pilmoor Enters North Carolina. George Whitefield. Letters of Rev. James Reed. New Lights. Letter of Governor Tryon. Joseph Pilmoor's Journal. Newbern. Wilmington. Sketch of Pilmoor. Robert Williams. D. Jarratt. First Societies Organized in North Carolina. Thomas Rankin: His Visit—Preaches to Large Congregations. Sketch of Robert Williams.

METHODISM did not have its origin in the New World, but here it found a soil in which to have its greatest growth. It began in England, in the year 1729. Mr. Wesley, in giving an account of the rise of Methodism, says: "In 1729 my brother and I, by reading the Bible, saw inward and outward holiness therein; followed after it, and incited others to do so." This reveals its spirit and mission. It was not to establish a new doctrine, or a new Church, but to seek after a new life, and to get others to do likewise. Its life is spiritual, and to carry this life to the ends of the earth is its mission. Wesley, its founder, said, "The world is my parish." With this desire to revive a formal and dying Christianity, having caught the spirit of the Master, who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," it crossed the Atlantic, and its fires were soon kindled upon the shores of the New World.

As to where Methodism was introduced in America is a question upon which the best authorities are divided. A



ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE.

discussion of this subject does not come within the scope of this work; neither is it material to us whether New York shall have this honor or Maryland. Both have their advocates. Some claim that the first Methodist preaching and first meetinghouse built in America were in the city of New York. Others claim that Robert Strawbridge moved from Ireland probably in 1760, and immediately opened his house for preaching, he having joined the Methodists before leaving his native land; and that the first meetinghouse erected in America was near Sam's Creek in Maryland; while Philip Embury did not begin his work in New York until about 1766. Jesse Lee, our first Methodist historian, gives New York the precedence. He says: "Not long after the society was formed in New York, Robert Strawbridge, from Ireland, who had settled in Frederick county, in the state of Maryland, began to hold meetings in public, and joined a society together near Pipe Creek."¹ It is not disputed that Philip Embury organized in New York and Robert Strawbridge in Maryland; that these consecrated men were local preachers, and to them belongs the honor of organizing the first societies in America.

The society in New York soon felt the need of an experienced preacher, and hence they appealed to Mr. Wesley.² The Conference was in session at Leeds when on Thursday Mr. Wesley presented the claims of his brethren in New York. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor offered themselves for service in America. These breth-

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 25.

²"History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," by Nathan Bangs, D.D., page 52.

ren, who were the first regular itinerant Methodist preachers to visit this country, landed at Gloucester Point, six miles from Philadelphia, on October 24, 1769. Mr. Boardman went to New York to enter upon his services, while Mr. Pilmoor began his work in Philadelphia. Mr. Pilmoor started south, stopping and preaching in Maryland and strengthening the work begun by Mr. Strawbridge; he continued through Virginia and North Carolina. He entered our state during the latter part of the year, 1772, and hence was the first Methodist preacher that penetrated the wilds of North Carolina.

Of course George Whitefield passed through the colony several times, and preached in some of the eastern towns. He visited America seven times, and sometimes traveled overland from Philadelphia to Savannah to visit his orphan house which he had established at that place. He visited Bathtown in the winter of 1748 for his health, but for some reason he did not remain long. While there he wrote to some of his friends in New York who were anxious about him: "I am here, hunting in the woods, these *ungospelized* wilds, for sinners."¹ At Newbern "his preaching was attended with uncommon influence."² This visit was in 1739-40. But it must be remembered that while Whitefield and Wesley were a unit in the main upon this great revival movement, yet they differed very ma-

¹ "Biography of George Whitefield," compiled by Joseph Belcher. There is a tradition that when Mr. Whitefield visited Bath, which is the oldest town in the state, "upon being refused cheer or comfort for the night, he walked outside of the town, shook its dust from his feet, and since that time it has never prospered."

² "History of Methodism," McTyeire, page 188.



GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

terially upon the great doctrines of Arminianism and Calvinism. Whitefield adhered to Calvinism, while John Wesley was a strong advocate of Arminianism; so that George Whitefield could not properly be styled an itinerant Methodist preacher.

But it is claimed that there were Methodists scattered over the eastern portion of the state as early as 1760. At this time Rev. James Reed, writing from Newbern to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, says: "Great numbers of dissenters of all denominations came and settled among us from New England, particularly Anabaptists, Methodists, Quakers, and Presbyterians. The Anabaptists are obstinate, illiterate, and grossly ignorant; the Methodists, ignorant, censorious, and uncharitable."¹ The next letter he writes is also from Newbern, and is dated June 25, 1761: "The Methodists of late have given me a good deal of trouble along the borders of my parish by preaching up the inexpediency of human learning and the practice of moral virtue, and the great expediency of dreams, visions, and immediate revelations. I have labored much to stop their progress, and I thank God with great success. If the Society could favor me with a few suitable small tracts, they would be of great service at present by preventing the poor, ignorant people from being deluded and easing the heavy burden of, sir, your most humble servant."² In another letter, dated December 26, 1761, he says: "The fervor of the Methodists upon the skirts and borders of my parish, which I mentioned in my last,

¹ "Colonial Records of North Carolina," Vol. VI., page 265.

²*Ibid.*, page 565.

is very much abated, and the little ground they had gained in this country, I verily believe, will, in a few months, be totally lost.”¹

If we were to consider the above in connection with a statement made by Jesse Lee and published in 1810, without examining other records, we would naturally conclude that there were, as early as 1760, Methodists in North Carolina who were real followers of John Wesley. Jesse Lee says: “Previous to the year 1766, some of the members of the Methodist Society from Europe settled in the United States (then British colonies), but were scattered about as sheep having neither fold nor shepherd.”² The date of the first organization in New York was 1766. This evidence, gathered from the “Colonial Records” and from Jesse Lee, is strong in favor of the claim that there were Methodists in North Carolina previous to the organization in New York or Maryland. The only objection that could be brought against the testimony of James Reed is that his description does not fit the Methodists. Yet that can be accounted for when we remember that he belonged to the Established Church, and that frequently at that period such language was used in speaking of dissenters.

But on December 21, 1764, Rev. James Reed writes a letter in which he described the visit of Rev. George Whitefield to Newbern. In this letter he states that Whitefield said that the enthusiastic sect in these parts known by the name of Methodists had been improperly

¹ “Colonial Records of North Carolina,” Vol. VI., page 594.

² Lee’s “Short History of the Methodists,” page 24.

named, for that there were none properly called by that name but the followers of himself and Mr. Wesley.¹ These Methodists, as appears from one of James Reed's letters, contended for "the rebaptizing of adults and the doctrine of the irresistible influence of the Spirit," while Whitefield recommended infant baptism and condemned the doctrine of the irresistible influence of the Spirit, declaring himself a member of the Church of England. There is no reason why Whitefield should have made these statements if they had been real Methodists. And certainly no one in this country at that time could speak with so much authority upon this subject as Mr. Whitefield, and he declares positively that they were not Methodists. We can account for the statements of Mr. Reed only in one way. It is probable that he got the name confused with a sect that was then attracting attention along the coast, known as New Lights.

Soon after the last letter written by Mr. Reed, Governor Tryon writes to the Society upon the religious condition of the country, in which he says: "Every sect abounds here except the Roman Catholic, and by the best information I can get, Presbytery and a sect who call themselves New Lights (not of the flock of Mr. Whitefield, but Superior Lights from New England) appear in the front. These New Lights live chiefly in the maritime counties; the Presbyterians are settled mostly in the back or westward counties, though the Church of England I reckon, at present, to have the majority of all other sects."²

¹ "Colonial Records in North Carolina," Vol. VI., page 1060.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. VII., page 102.

From the time that Mr. Whitefield declared that a certain sect was improperly called Methodists, there is not another reference made to them as such; but in the next letter, on the religious condition of the colony, there is a sect called New Lights which had not been mentioned before, but explaining at the same time that they were not of the flock of Mr. Whitefield. This looks as if Mr. Reed was confused in his use of the terms, Methodists and New Lights. The reader will also notice that the sect spoken of by Mr. Reed was from New England, and Governor Tryon says the New Lights were from New England. Again, if there were two separate sects they were the same in doctrine,—both Calvinistic. The Presbyterians at that day were sometimes called the New Lights.¹ The Baptists were also called New Lights.²

Mr. Whitefield by his eloquent preaching no doubt prepared the way for the planting of Methodism. So also did the preaching of Joseph Pilmoor, who was the first Methodist preacher sent out by Mr. Wesley to enter North Carolina. Perhaps some extracts from Mr. Pilmoor's Journal will be interesting to the reader.

After Pilmoor had been preaching for some time in Virginia and organized the first society in that province, he turned his face toward North Carolina. In making the statement in reference to his organizing in Virginia, we are aware that every Methodist historian, so far as known,

¹Minutes of 1810. For a fuller account of the New Lights see Benedict's "History of the Baptists." Also *Arminian Magazine*, Philadelphia, 1790, page 601.

²Benedict's History, Vol. II., page 29.

with only one exception,¹ gives the honor of organizing the first society in Virginia to Robert Williams. Pilmoor entered Virginia on July 17, 1772; and while it is true that Robert Williams was in Norfolk the spring before and preached, yet there is no account of his organizing a society until 1774.²

The first society organized in Virginia was organized in Portsmouth by Joseph Pilmoor on November 14, 1772. Pilmoor says in his Journal: "Had a vast multitude [in Portsmouth] to hear me read and explain the Rules of the Society. When I had done so, as they have been deeply convinced of their need of a Saviour and are truly desirous to flee from the wrath to come, I joined twenty-seven of them who are determined to seek the Lord while he may be found."

Two days after this he organized a society in Norfolk. Of that event, which is so interesting and important in Methodist history, we will let Pilmoor furnish the account which follows: "Thursday, November the 16th, 1772. Having proposed to form a society in Norfolk, I went to the preaching house and gave an exhortation on the nature and necessity of meeting together to help build each other up in the faith of the gospel. I then withdrew to Captain Carson's, where I laid the foundation of a society by joining twenty-six of them together who are likely to war a good warfare and obtain the victory through the blood of the Lamb. . . . I have long wept and prayed that God would raise up a people in this place, and now my prayer

¹Dr. John Atkinson.

²Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 51.

is answered, and I clasp my hands exultingly in the halleluiahs to the Lord the King.”

It is sure that Pilmoor organized in the twin cities of Portsmouth and Norfolk; and as these were the chief preaching places in the state for the Methodists, and having no account of any society being organized earlier, we feel sure that to Joseph Pilmoor belongs the honor of organizing the first society in Virginia.

We have no account that Pilmoor organized in North Carolina, but he has the honor of preaching the first Methodist sermon in the colony, on September 28, 1772. “On the twenty-seventh of September, 1772, he says: ‘I took leave of my dear friends for a little while and set out for North Carolina. The day was very hot and my way was through the woods. I called at many little houses on the road, but could get nothing for my horse till late in the afternoon, when I found a little ordinary, where I stopped to dine. I resolved to stop there all night. In the evening several young countrymen came in who desired to speak to me, and we spent our time in agreeable conversation, singing, and prayer.’ Next morning he resumed his journey, and a little before noon reached Currituck Courthouse, in North Carolina. He began without delay, and declared to Churchmen, Baptists, and Presbyterians, ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’” It was a good text for a Methodist sermon at that day, and nothing could have been more appropriate than a Holy Ghost sermon, in opening a campaign in North Carolina, for the salvation of men. “God made his word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. The poor people



JOSEPH PILMOOR.

expressed the utmost gratitude," says Pilmoor, "and Colonel Williams invited me to dine. As it was in my way, I gladly accepted the offer, and found one of the prettiest places I have seen in North Carolina. I was entertained with true primitive hospitality." In the morning he went about five miles to a small chapel, where he had a very good time in preaching and prayer. This chapel was no doubt at Coinjock, and belonged to the Established Church, and according to Dr. Coke was a "pretty chapel." It will be observed that Pilmoor found several chapels in this section, and while they belonged to the Established Church, they were generally used by the preachers of the Methodist Society until about the time of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Dr. Coke says of the Coinjock Chapel, "We do regular duty in it."

The Colonel Williams who had the honor of being the first North Carolinian to entertain a Methodist preacher was a prominent man in Currituck county. He was Hallowell Williams, who was a member of Congress held at Halifax in 1776, and was colonel of the field officers of Currituck. Dr. Coke speaks of him in very complimentary terms when he visited him in 1785. He was a good Christian at that time and a very active Methodist.¹ He had great admiration for Pilmoor from the start, and not only invited him to his home, but accompanied him on his first preaching tour in North Carolina.

Colonel Williams and Pilmoor traveled about twenty miles, to the Narrows Chapel, on the 29th of September,

¹See Wheeler's History, page 134; *Arminian Magazine*, Vol. I., 1789, page 340.

1772. The road lay through the woods, and was rough and perilous. At the chapel they had a very solemn time. Pilmoor asserts that "the poor, ignorant people were greatly affected. One poor old man came to me with tears in his eyes, thanking me for what he had heard, and begged me to accept of some money to help me along. I told him I was not in want, and begged him to excuse me, but nothing would satisfy him without I would take it as a token of his Christian regard and love of the gospel of Christ. We then mounted, and hastening on our way, in the evening came safe to Colonel Williams's." This was not only a day of long travel, but also of enforced abstinence. Of it Pilmoor wrote: "As I had traveled above fifty miles without any other refreshment than a bit of bread and a little water, and exerted myself pretty much in preaching, I was sufficiently tired. But it is for Jesus."

The next day, September 30th, he left Williams's home and rode to a new church on the border of Virginia, where he preached "to a large congregation of weeping sinners." The following day was the Sabbath, and after family prayer, Pilmoor, in very rough weather, crossed the bay in a canoe, and then walked over the fields to the meeting-house, where he "had a congregation of Baptists and others, who were all attention." From that meetinghouse he rode about eight miles further, and showed to "a fine congregation the way of salvation, and spent the evening in conversation with Christian friends." The ensuing day he started early for Kemp's Landing, about twenty miles distant, where he arrived in time to preach at noon. The meeting was at the public house. There was to be a horse

race in the afternoon, and before Pilmoor left the tavern he spoke of "the absurdity of such sport," and showed "how ridiculous it is for gentlemen of sense to ride many miles to see two or three horses run about a field with negroes on their backs." When he called for his bill, the host politely declined to receive pay. In the evening Pilmoor was again in Norfolk.

In the closing days of 1772 we find him in Newbern; and in speaking of Newbern, he says: "In all my travels through the world, I have met with none like the people of Newbern." After the evening service on Christmas, he records: "Mr. William Wood took me home with him, and I had everything that my heart could desire." "On Thursday, December 31, 1772, about three o'clock I set onward with Mr. and Mrs. Wood and Captain Richards, and hastening on pretty fast, at seven we arrived at Mrs. Williams's, where it was appointed for me to preach." He speaks of dining on December 26, 1772, with a Mr. Edwards¹ who was secretary to the governor.

"Friday, January 1st, 1773. I rose pretty early and devoted the first fruit of the day and the beginning of the year unto God. The family gladly joined with me in the high praises of the Lord the King, and we had a special blessing in waiting upon him. I then took leave of my dear Newbern friends and the family, and went forward about seventeen miles to Foxe's tavern, where I stopped to bait. As there were many people walking about, I spoke to several of them about the salvation of their souls and

¹Captain Isaac Edwards was Secretary of the Colony under both Governor Tryon and Governor Martin.

proposed to join in singing a psalm and prayer, to which they readily consented; and I was greatly blessed in calling upon God for them, and left them in hope that some of them will remember this opportunity with thankfulness to God for his wondrous goodness. I then set out again, and about seven o'clock found a place of rest. As I have no guide, and am totally unacquainted with the road, it is rather disagreeable traveling in the woods in the night; but my trust is in God, and he keeps me from harm. After some refreshment, was thankful for an opportunity of joining in the worship of God.

"The next day it rained heavily most of the day, and it was long after night before I could find a place to lodge. At last I came to Mr. Collier's, some fifteen miles from Wilmington, where I slept in peace. Sunday, 3d. As I longed much for an opportunity of preaching, I set off for Wilmington, but was greatly distressed on the road. The excessive rains that fell the day before had raised the waters and washed away a bridge; so I was at a loss what to do; but I resolved to take the horse from the chaise, put some planks for the wheels and draw it over myself, which I did, and then got the horse over without any hurt, and proceeded on my journey to the town.

"When I was at dinner I was greatly surprised at the sight of a young man who had been in Society with us in Philadelphia; and he, together with a sea captain who had seen me in the north, were very ready to publish preaching for me; and in the evening I had a large congregation of attentive hearers, and God gave me great freedom of mind to declare, 'Yet surely I know that it shall be well with

them that fear God.' I believe many of them felt the word of the Lord, and it may hereafter bring forth fruit unto holiness, that their end may be everlasting life.

"Monday evening I had the courthouse well filled again and had liberty in my own mind while I preached Christ the Prophet, Priest, and King. After preaching I was a good deal straitened and exercised in my mind; nothing on earth affords me any satisfaction if my Lord withdraws himself from me. When he is present, 'tis heaven with my soul; if he withdraws, 'tis hell.

"Tuesday. I found my mind more happy. I spent the morning in writing letters to my numerous correspondents; dined with Mr. Morgatroyed, a merchant of Philadelphia, and in the evening had another large congregation, and was enabled to preach the whole counsel of God, and deliver my own soul.

"Wednesday. I had a young gentleman to invite me to the country, but I was fixed to go forward to the south, and therefore could not comply with his request. The people at the inn where I stayed were remarkably civil; they would not suffer me to pay for anything, but entreated me to stay longer with them. As there are many people in the place, I should be glad to stay, only I was under necessity of hastening toward Charleston. After dinner I set off and intended to reach Brunswick, but the roads were so bad I was compelled to stop by the way.

"In the morning I hastened on to the town in hopes of preaching that day, but could not get the people together until Friday, when we had a fine congregation in the

church¹ where I found liberty and power to preach the gospel.

"Saturday. I dined with William Hill, Esq., to whom I had letters of recommendation. He is a gentleman of good understanding, and a friend of serious religion, so that I spent the time very comfortably."

Mr. Pilmoor was converted in his sixteenth year under the ministry of Mr. Wesley and educated at Kingswood School. He joined the itinerancy in 1765, and came to America in 1769, and did faithful work until January, 1774, when he saw the war cloud gathering. "After commending the Americans to God," he sailed for his native land. He continued to travel until 1784, when he retired from the connection. Soon afterwards he returned to America and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and became pastor of a church in New York. Later he became rector of St. Paul's in Philadelphia. He was a fluent speaker and a man of considerable ability. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Pennsylvania. He was always glad to admit the Methodist preachers to his pulpit, and went down to the grave with a warm love for Methodism.

The next Methodist preacher to follow Joseph Pilmoor into North Carolina was Robert Williams. In the beginning of 1773 he went to Petersburg in Virginia and began to preach in the town, and then in various parts of the country.² No Methodist preacher had preceded him in

¹The Established Church, which later became the Protestant Episcopal Church.

²Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 42.

this portion of the state, though the spirit of revival fire had gone before him. Rev. D. Jarratt, of the Church of England, had been in this section since 1763, and in zeal and religious fervor he was very much like the Methodists. A revival under his preaching began in 1770, and in 1772 it had extended for fifty or sixty miles away.¹ When Mr. Jarratt began his work here in 1763 profaneness and irreligion prevailed among all ranks and degrees.² He cried aloud against the sins of the day, and preached the gospel in its simplicity and power. His conception of the gospel message and his manner of delivering it were new to the people of that section; for what he preached was not believed even by the clergymen in his own Church.³ The people raised an outcry against his way of preaching as well as against his doctrines. But without abandoning the field he continued until he saw the fruits of his labors in 1770-1772, when one of the greatest revivals of religion ever known in this country swept over all that section. Mr. Jarratt began like Mr. Wesley to form his people into a Society. "The good effects of this were soon apparent; convictions were deep and lasting; and not only knowledge, but faith and love and holiness continued."⁴ His sermons were evangelical, a volume of which was published by William Glendenning in Raleigh in 1805.

When Robert Williams began his work in Petersburg, he spent one week in the family of Mr. Jarratt.⁵ It was

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 43.

²Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., page 209.

³*Ibid.*, page 209.

⁴Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 43.

⁵Life of Jarratt, pages 107-110.

no doubt an inspiration to Mr. Williams to spend this time with a man so full of faith, courage, zeal, and holiness. No one can tell what influence the encouragement he received here has had upon Methodism in Virginia and North Carolina. His name will ever be held in sweet remembrance as being a warm friend of the early itinerants of Methodism.

When Robert Williams reached his work in 1773, he found the revival fires already kindled. He used every opportunity to preach the gospel and push forward his work. He would go to hear the clergy of the Established Church, and after the congregation was dismissed he would go out of the church and standing on a stump or log would begin to sing, pray, and then preach to hundreds. It was also common for him after preaching to speak to as many as possible personally and question them about the salvation of their souls.¹ With such zeal as this, during that year he traveled and preached over a great deal of that section of the country down as far as the north part of North Carolina.² It is claimed by some that he organized the first society in North Carolina during this year, 1773. While this is stated as a fact by some historians, it is only a presumption; and though it is quite probable, yet there is no proof that he organized before 1774. Jesse Lee says: "In the beginning of this year, 1774, Robert Williams began to form societies in Virginia, and made out a plan for a six weeks' circuit which ex-

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 43.

²*Ibid.*, page 43.

tended from Petersburg to the south over Roanoke River some distance into North Carolina.”¹

In the midst of these stirring times, Rev. Thomas Rankin made a visit to this section, and accompanied Mr. Jarratt in a tour through the southern part of Virginia and into North Carolina. Here is Mr. Rankin’s account of his visit to North Carolina :

“Monday, July 15th, 1775. I rode toward North Carolina. In every place the congregations were large, and received the word with all readiness of mind. I know not that I have spent such a week since I came to America. I saw everywhere such a simplicity in the people, with such a vehement thirst after the word of God, that I frequently preached and continued in prayer till I was hardly able to stand. Indeed, there was no getting away from them while I was able to speak one sentence for God.

“Sunday, 21st. I preached at Roanoke Chapel to more than double of what the house would contain. In general, the white people were within the chapel, and the black people without. The windows being all open, every one could hear, and hundreds felt the word of God. Many were bathed in tears, and others rejoicing with joy unspeakable. When the society met, many could not refrain from praising God aloud. I preached to a large company in the afternoon, and concluded the day with prayer and thanksgiving.

“Tuesday, 23d. I crossed the Roanoke River, and preached at a chapel in North Carolina, and I preached

¹Lee’s “Short History of the Methodists,” page 51.

every day to very large and deeply attentive congregations; although not without much labor and pain, through the extreme heat of the weather.

"On Tuesday, 30, was our quarterly meeting. I scarce ever remember such a season. No chapel or preaching place in Virginia would have contained one-third of the congregation. Our friends, knowing this, had contrived to shade with boughs of trees a space that would contain two or three thousand people. Under this, wholly screened from the rays of the sun, we held our general love feast. It began between eight and nine on Wednesday morning, and continued till noon. Many testified that they had redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins. And many were enabled to declare that it had cleansed them from all sin. So clear, so full, so strong was their testimony, that while some were speaking their experience hundreds were in tears, and others vehemently crying to God for pardon or holiness."

Devereux Jarratt in writing of the revival in 1775, says: "This revival of religion spread through fourteen counties in Virginia and through Bute and Halifax counties in North Carolina. At the same time we had a blessed outpouring of the Spirit in several counties bordering upon Maryland."

The new circuit planned by Williams was called Brunswick, and had for its preachers in 1775 John King, John Wade, and Isaac Rollins. The labors of these faithful men of God were greatly blessed on this circuit, and toward the close of the year 1775 a most remarkable revival of religion was the result. Mr. Jarratt says:

"We had a time of refreshing indeed; a revival of religion as great as perhaps ever was known." There were about six hundred members added to the Society on the circuit in the course of that year.¹ In 1775, Robert Williams does not appear on the list of appointments. He married, and hence it was necessary for him to locate. He settled between Suffolk and Norfolk, where he died on September 26, 1775. He did a great work for Methodism during the short time that he labored in southern Virginia and in the northern part of North Carolina. It was Robert Williams who was instrumental, in the hands of God, in bringing into the connection Rev. Jesse Lee; and if he had done nothing more, that was enough to start a wave of influence that will widen until the judgment of the great day. Mr. Lee, in speaking of him, says: "He was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the gospel, and often proved the goodness of his doctrine, by his tears in public and by his life and conduct in private. His manner of preaching was well calculated to awaken careless sinners and to encourage penitent mourners. He spared no pains in order to do good."

Robert Williams was not a brilliant man, but he has done a work that will grow as the years go by. North Carolina joins Virginia in holding his memory sacred, as being one of the first to plant Methodism in our soil. Rev. W. W. Bennett, D.D., refers to him thus: "We look with peculiar feelings on him who stands first in a great cause.

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 53.

Robert Williams preached the first Methodist sermon on Virginia soil, he joined the first society,¹ he printed the first Methodist book, he aided in building the first church, he made out the plan for the first circuit, he was the first to marry, the first to locate, the first to die, the first of that band of heroes that passed into the City of our God, and took his place amid the white-robed elders around the Throne."

¹This is questionable, as we have seen.

Halifax
Roanoke

CHAPTER III.

EARLY CIRCUITS AND PIONEERS.

Methodism Enters with a Revival—Jarratt's Account of it—Jesse Lee's Account of it. Carolina Circuit Formed—Preachers Experience Difficulties. Declaration of Independence. Edward Dromgoole—Description by B. Devany—Preaches on the Power of God—Great Effect. Francis Poythress—Sketch of his Life—Appointed Presiding Elder—Labors in Kentucky—Letter from Rev. Thomas Scott. Isham Tatum—Peter Doub Meets Him—Great Orator. Circuit Appears as North Carolina in 1777. Methodism Crosses the Blue Ridge. Sketch of John King—Wesley's Letter. John Dickins—Death from Yellow Fever. Lee Roy Cole. Edward Pride. William Glendenning. Roanoke Circuit.

WE have just seen that Methodism entered the state in a great revival which spread from the Brunswick Circuit. No such revival had ever been known in this country before. Mr. Jarratt, in a letter to Mr. Wesley giving a full account of it, among other things says: "The multitudes that attended on this occasion, returning home all alive to God, spread the flame through their respective neighborhoods, which ran from family to family; so that, within four weeks, several hundreds found the peace of God. And scarce any conversation was to be heard throughout the circuit, but concerning the things of God." This flame of revival crossed over into North Carolina as we have seen, and entered Halifax county, from which it spread over all that part of the state.¹ Jesse Lee gives a very graphic account of this revival, but in conclusion he

Roanoke



¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 59.

says: "My pen cannot describe the one-half of what I saw, heard, and felt. I might fill a volume on this subject, and then leave the greater part untold."

As a result of this revival, and perhaps of other efforts that had been made in North Carolina, there were six hundred and eighty-three members reported at the fourth Conference which was held in Baltimore, May 21st, 1776. At this Conference there were four new circuits added, which were Fairfax, Hanover, Pittsylvania, and Carolina. The latter lay in North Carolina, and had for its preachers Edward Dromgoole, Francis Poythress, and Isham Tatum. It would be hard to locate the boundaries of this new circuit, as there was no circuit on the south or west, unless the Pittsylvania extended into North Carolina in the west. Hence their field of labor was practically unlimited, having no boundary lines. But how much of this territory was covered by the labors of these pioneers we have been unable to learn. It is certain they penetrated a great portion of the state, and laid the foundation of Methodism upon which their successors have been successfully building ever since.

But these men had many difficulties to meet. No one of their kind had gone before them. They had to explore the wilderness and cultivate a virgin soil. The people looked upon them with suspicion. And to add to their discouragement, soon after they reached the circuit the Declaration of Independence was made and the war cloud was gathering over the land. The men of Mecklenburg and those of other sections of the colony were talking independence, and liberty was in the air. England was pre-

paring to begin operations with a fixed purpose to conquer these rebellious colonies of the New World. The people of the colonies were everywhere talking war, mustering, and getting ready to meet England in the conflict to fight to the death for their liberty. Under these circumstances, these men of God began their work with Bible and hymn book in hand. But with all these drawbacks they had what might be considered great success, for they reported at the next Conference nine hundred and thirty members, which is a net gain of two hundred and forty-seven. They were strong men, had a large field, and did a great work.

As this was the first circuit in North Carolina, and Edward Dromgoole, Francis Poythress, and Isham Tatum were its first preachers, they require more than a passing notice in these pages, and more than will be given to men of the same ability and usefulness under other circumstances.

Edward Dromgoole, whose name heads the list on this circuit, was born in Sligo, Ireland, about the year 1751. He was brought up a Roman Catholic, and when he was approaching manhood heard the Methodists in his native country, was convicted of sin, joined the Society, and soon afterwards read his recantation publicly in the Catholic church, which caused much displeasure among some of his relatives. In 1770 he sailed for America, and settled in Maryland, near Baltimore, where he had the privilege of hearing Mr. Strawbridge preach during the year, which helped to decide his course for the future. Mr. Dromgoole began preaching in 1774, and in the same year was appointed to Baltimore. "As soon as the Revolutionary

War broke out, he took the oath of allegiance to his adopted country, and carefully preserved the certificate thereof as a testimonial of his fidelity to the American cause." He retired from the traveling work in 1786. Perhaps this was due to the fact that he was a married man. Mr. Asbury says: "Edward Dromgoole is a good preacher, but entangled with a family. We spoke of a plan for building houses in every circuit for preachers' wives, and the Society to supply their families with bread and meat, as the preachers should travel from place to place as when single; for unless something of the kind be done, we shall have no preachers but young ones in a few years. They will marry and stop." Asbury had great confidence in Mr. Dromgoole, and often leaned upon him during the stormy days of early Methodism. His labors "in that critical time, in behalf of peace and union, were earnest, and no doubt effective." He was, on account of his age and experience, a very conspicuous character in the Christmas Conference in 1784. His name appears for the last time in the minutes of 1785. Locating in Brunswick county, Virginia, he lived a useful life as a local preacher, and preserved an unblemished character to the end.

Dromgoole was no ordinary man. He "possessed a high order of intellect; he was plain in his dress, gentle and unassuming in his deportment; of deep piety, and of great moral worth. He was, for piety, zeal, and usefulness, the embodiment of a primitive Methodist preacher." He had originality of mind, and was not accustomed to repeat his sermons. His preaching was pertinent, eloquent, and effective.

Thirty years after he traveled the Carolina Circuit, he returned and attended a camp meeting at one of his old preaching places. And we are fortunate in having a description of the scene on that occasion by Rev. B. Devany, who was present. He says: "When Mr. Dromgoole entered the stand to preach, he deliberately put off his coat and, I think, his neckcloth, which was nothing unusual with the old preachers of that day. He commenced by saying, 'That the attention of the people may not be drawn off by inquiring who the preacher is, I will tell you. You recollect about thirty years ago there was a young man who traveled here by the name of Edward Dromgoole; I am that man.' His text was, 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.' The power of God was the burden of his theme, and when, by the force of his Irish eloquence, he carried us in imagination to the place 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' it was awfully sublime, it was beyond description. His voice, his countenance, and his gestures all gave a power to his eloquence which is rarely equaled at this day. The copious flow of tears, and the awful peals of his voice, showed that the preacher's whole soul was thrown into the subject, and it produced the most thrilling effect that I had ever witnessed. There was not a dry eye among the hundreds who listened to him on that occasion. In my long experience and close observation, I have never known a local preacher who maintained so noble a stand, and wielded so wide a moral influence, as he did. With Wesley, Asbury, and all his other compeers in the ministry, he is reaping his glorious reward." He lived to see

Methodism number its hundreds of thousands. He passed over the river into rest in 1835, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

Francis Poythress was appointed second man on the Carolina Circuit in 1776. He was a native of Virginia; inherited a large estate from his father, and when a young man was very much dissipated. A reproof from a good woman made a wonderful impression upon him, and he at once began to seek the salvation of his soul. Under the preaching of Rev. Devereux Jarratt he was brought to a practical knowledge of the saving power of the gospel. Having determined to devote himself to the work of the ministry, he was admitted on trial in the traveling connection in 1776, and began his career as an itinerant preacher on the Carolina Circuit.

"Our pioneer work called out no one probably more remarkable than Francis Poythress. From the many prominent appointments he filled, he must have occupied a high position in the esteem and affections of the pioneer Church."¹ He traveled on circuits in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland until 1786, when he was appointed a presiding elder. He traveled on large districts until 1797, when it became necessary, "from excessive labors, occasioned by the most fatiguing travel and hardships," for him to take a supernumerary relation. As a presiding elder he was preëminently successful. He presided over the Annual Conference, in the absence of the bishop, for a number of years while he was in Kentucky. He was

¹W. C. Doub in "Centennial of Methodism in North Carolina," page 61.

held in very high esteem by Bishop Asbury, and was nominated by him at one time for bishop. One has said, "Poythress is to the Southwest what Jesse Lee was to New England,—an apostle."

In 1800 he returned to North Carolina and was appointed to a district, reaching from Swannanoa on the west to Mattamuskeet on the east, embracing fifteen circuits. This proved too much for his already enfeebled constitution. "Here he suffered greatly from depression of spirits, occasioned by a total prostration of the nervous system; but he kept on laboring until his mind and body were reduced well-nigh to a common wreck." He returned to Kentucky, and tried to serve for another year, but the fire of genius and intelligence that once shot from his eye was gone. He soon treated his best friends as strangers. Thus he lingered on the shores of time under this dark cloud, until about 1818, near Lexington, Kentucky, his spirit took its flight to its everlasting home. Poythress was a hero, who pressed the battle on many a well-fought field. Bravely did he endure the toils and hardships as a good soldier of the cross. In a campaign of twenty-four years, in the wilds of a new and unsettled country, he never faltered.

Rev. Thomas Scott, a personal friend of the deceased, and himself one of the early pioneers of Methodism, has furnished an account of some personal reminiscences with the melancholy fate of this zealous and indefatigable itinerant, which we find in Rev. J. B. Finley's "Sketches of Western Methodism," and which we subjoin:

"Brother Poythress was grave in his deportment, and

chaste in his conversation, constant in his private devotions, and faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties. We have no recollection of his having ever disappointed a congregation unless prevented by sickness or disease. As often as practicable he visited from house to house, instructed and prayed in the family. Among the preachers he, like most other men, may have had his particular favorites, but all were treated by him with due benevolence and Christian respect. He was unwearied in his effort to unite the traveling and local ministry as a band of brothers, so that their united efforts might be exerted in furthering the cause of God. As the weight of all the churches in his district rested upon him, he sensibly felt the responsibility of his station, and put forth his utmost efforts to discharge, with fidelity, these important trusts which had been confided to him. The education of the rising generation he deemed to be intimately connected with the interest of the Church, and the result of that conviction was the erection of Bethel Academy.

“The conversational powers of brother Poythress were not of a high order, yet when he did engage in general conversation he maintained his part with propriety, evincive of an extensive knowledge of men and things. His rank as a preacher was not much above mediocrity. He was, however, sound in the faith, in doctrine, in purity. There are many words in common use which he could not pronounce correctly; this he attributed to the loss of his teeth.

“He was—if we rightly remember—about five feet eight or nine inches in height, and heavily built. His

muscles were large, and when in the prime of life, we presume, he was a man of more than ordinary muscular strength. He dressed plainly and neatly. His general appearance was such as to command the respectful consideration of others. He possessed high, honorable feelings, and a deep sense of moral obligations. In general he was an excellent disciplinarian. He endeavored to probe to the bottom each wound in the Church, in order that a radical cure might be effected; but would never consent to expel from the bosom of the Church those who evidenced contrition and amendment. And when free from the morbid action of his system, to which it becomes our painful duty to refer, we esteemed him to be a man of sound discriminating judgment. 'Symptoms of insanity were, at times, discoverable in brother Poythress several years prior to the time he ceased to travel and to preach, and such may have been his situation' at the time he was sometimes criticised by his brethren. We think the veil of Christian charity ought to be drawn over actions induced by a morbid excitement of the system, materially affecting his intellectual faculties.

"The last time we saw him was in the fore part of the winter of 1800. The balance of his mind was lost, and his body lay a complete wreck. His labors in the Church militant were at an end, but the fruits of his labors still remain."

The third name on the Carolina Circuit in 1776 was that of Isham Tatum. At this period it was the custom to send several preachers to one charge; so three were sent to this new field. This was Tatum's first charge. He

traveled for a few years only, and then, like so many others at that day, he got married, and that necessitated a location; though he traveled long enough to convince the Church that he had zeal and ability to do successful work as an itinerant preacher. His fields of labor were as follows: 1776, Carolina; 1777, Pittsylvania; 1778, Fluvania; 1779, Amelia; 1780, Hanover. In 1781, he "desisted from traveling." The above fields were most of them new and difficult. He sowed; others reaped, and are still reaping.

Rev. Peter Doub, D.D., was on the Culpeper Circuit in Virginia during the second year of his ministry, which was in 1819, and he says he found Isham Tatum living in the bounds of this circuit, of whom he makes the following statement in his Autobiography: "Became acquainted with Rev. Isham Tatum, who commenced the work of the itinerancy about the beginning of the Revolutionary War, or a little before, and for some years continued to travel. When he married he settled himself in the county of Madison, Va., and continued a local preacher for many years. He had been a minister for more than sixty years when he died. He was a very good, sound divine; very eloquent, and so highly esteemed by the public in this regard that he was known throughout the country as the 'Silver Trumpet.' He also left a large number of descendants, most of whom are members of the Church he so faithfully labored to establish."¹ He also has some descendants in Orange county, North Carolina.²

¹Autobiography of Rev. Peter Doub, D.D., Manuscript.

²"Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," Moore.



A PIONEER.

We are not able to give the exact date of his death, but we know that he lived to a good old age, being at the time of his death the oldest Methodist preacher in the United States.¹ He thus lived to witness the wonderful growth and development of his Church for the first fifty years of its existence in this country. Then "without a stain upon his escutcheon, he laid aside his armor to wear the victor's crown; he entered into his eternal rest. In his pure, devoted, unselfish life, he left the Church a legacy as rich as the toilsome labor he underwent and the suffering he endured. What a glorious meeting with his old companions in tribulation! What a time of rejoicing over the fruits of the suffering awaited him within the gates of the City of God!"²

As we have seen, at the close of the year these three preachers reported nine hundred and thirty members in North Carolina. The Conference was held at a meeting-house near Deer Creek in Maryland. The circuit in 1777 appears on the minutes as North Carolina, with John King, John Dickins, Lee Roy Cole, and Edward Pride. This was evidently one of the most promising fields in the connection—great in possibilities and great in territorial extent. Dr. McAnally thinks that these preachers during this year certainly crossed the Blue Ridge and planted the standards of Methodism in the Holston country. This is the date that he fixes, as he claims based upon good reasons, as the time when Methodism was organized in

¹ Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," page 102.

²"Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," Moore, page 106.

that section.¹ But while it was a field of vast possibilities, yet it must have required much faith in God to enter it under the circumstances and make a success. It will be remembered that the war cloud was still hanging over the land. At the Conference the 25th of July was appointed as a general fast day. The preachers certainly felt that it was a critical time for the planting of the new Church. We find this question and answer recorded in the minutes: "As the present distress is such, are the preachers resolved to take no step to detach themselves from the work for the ensuing year?" "We propose, by the grace of God, not to take any step that may separate us from the brethren, or from the blessed work in which we are engaged." With such a purpose, they went forward, and success crowned their efforts.

John King was born in England in the year 1746. He was graduated from Oxford and from a medical college in London. He was converted under the preaching of John Wesley, and at once connected himself with the Society, which was bitterly opposed by his family. "Finally he was disinherited," but this only made him the more steadfast. He opened his heart to Mr. Wesley, and soon sailed for Philadelphia, obtained license to preach, went to Maryland and assisted Strawbridge in his work there. He preached the first Methodist sermon in the city of Baltimore. At the first Conference in America, which convened in Philadelphia, 1773, his name appears upon the minutes, and he was sent that year to New Jersey; in

¹ "History of Methodism in Tennessee," McFerrin, Vol. I., page 328.

1774, to Norfolk; in 1775, to Trenton, N. J.; and in 1776 his name does not appear on the minutes. "About this time he bought a home in Franklin county, North Carolina, near the present county seat, Louisburg, where he lived until 1789 or 1790, when he removed to Wake county, about ten miles west of Raleigh."¹ And in 1777 we find him assigned to the North Carolina Circuit. His name does not appear in the printed minutes after this. He had married and located, remaining a local preacher and practicing medicine. Asbury frequently mentions him in his Journal, and from the way he speaks of him we infer that he was held in high esteem by Mr. Asbury.

In Mr. Wesley's miscellaneous works we find this letter written to John King which we reproduce: "My dear brother, always take advice or reproof as a favor; it is the surest mark of love. I advised you once, and you took it as an affront; nevertheless I will do it once more. Scream no more at the peril of your soul. God now warns you, by me whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not cry.' The word properly means, 'He shall not scream.' Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak aloud, often vehemently, but I never scream; I never strain myself,—I dare not. I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died

¹"Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," Moore. page 54

was because they shortened their own lives. O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper. By nature you are very far from it; you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you can take it from your affectionate brother," etc.

We quote from Rev. M. H. Moore. In speaking of King, he says: "He died while on a visit to Newbern in 1794, and was buried at his home in Wake county. His children—six in number—were all members of the Methodist Church. Two of his sons, John and William, were Methodist preachers. A son of William, Rev. Marcus King, is now a member of the Kentucky Conference."¹

John Dickins was born in 1746 in the city of London. He was well educated—partly at Eton College. He came to this country, and some time about 1774 he joined the Methodist Society in Virginia. In 1777 he was admitted into the traveling connection, and appointed to the North Carolina Circuit; in 1778, to Brunswick; in 1779 and 1780, to Roanoke; but in 1781 he located, doubtless because of failing health, for when Bishop Asbury visited him, he says, "his voice is gone." Two years later he was readmitted and appointed to New York, where he had great success for two years. In 1785 he traveled the Bertie Circuit, and the three following years in New York. And when the Book Concern was established, in 1789, he was appointed to superintend the business, where he remained until his death in 1798. He died of that terrible scourge

¹"Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," page 56.



JOHN DICKINS.

yellow fever, after passing through two epidemics of the same malady. Through them all he remained at the post of duty. The following letter was written to his friend Bishop Asbury, at the time when this pestilence was numbering its victims by the scores and hundreds: "My much esteemed friend and brother, I sit down to write as in the jaws of death—whether Providence may permit me to see your face again in the flesh, I know not. But if not, I hope, through abundant mercy, that we shall meet in the presence of God. I am truly conscious that I am an unprofitable, *a very unprofitable*, servant; but I think my heart condemns me not; and, therefore, I have confidence toward God. Perhaps I might have left the city, as most of my friends and brethren have done; but when I thought of such a thing, my mind recurred to that Providence which has done so much for me, a poor worm, that I was afraid of indulging in any distrust. So I commit myself and family into the hands of God, for life or death." Asbury says of him: "For piety, probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found either in Europe or America." In another chapter we will refer to this faithful servant of God again.

Lee Roy Cole was born in Virginia, June 5, 1749. He was twenty-six years old before the Methodists were known in his section. One of Cole's brothers heard them somewhere and brought a favorable report of their labors. This report impressed him deeply. Years afterwards, in speaking of it, he says: "From what he said, I was deeply impressed that they were gospel ministers, and that it was

the work of God among them. From this view I went into the field and lifted my hands and heart to God, and made a solemn vow that I would serve him all the days of my life. I prepared myself, and went about one hundred miles in pursuit of these ministers. I called at a house where I understood the people were Methodists, and while I was there a traveling minister came in, namely, James Foster. I viewed him with scrutiny, and was well pleased with all his movements. Under his prayer my feelings were so awakened that, after he closed, I sat by him and put my arm around him. About three weeks after I set out to seek the Lord. The Father of Mercies was graciously pleased at a night meeting, between the hours of twelve and one, powerfully to convert my soul. From that time I walked in the sunshine of his love from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year."¹ He was licensed to preach by Mr. Shadford, joined the itinerancy, and was appointed with others to North Carolina. He was ordained at the Christmas Conference in 1784.

At the Conference held in Baltimore, June, 1785, he was suspended from the ministry. The charges against him are unknown. Dr. Coke says: "We opened our Conference, and were driven to the painful necessity of suspending a member, and he no less than an elder, who for ten years had retained an unblemished reputation."² This undoubtedly refers to Cole, as the minutes for 1785 contain this brief passage: "Question 9. Who is laid aside? Lee Roy Cole." The allegation against him is not known, but

¹*Christian Advocate and Journal*, March 19, 1830.

²Coke's *Journal*, *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, page 397.

we know he asserted his innocence and trusted in God for his vindication. And "in less than a year the Conference became convinced of the injustice of their verdict and invited Mr. Cole again into their fellowship."¹ The Conference showed their confidence by appointing him "elder" over Newbern, New River, Wilmington, and Antigua. He only traveled a few years when his health failed, and he retired from the itinerancy. In 1808 he went to Kentucky, and served the Church there as a local preacher until 1814, when he was readmitted into the traveling connection, where he labored faithfully for a few years, and then remained in the superannuate relation until the 6th of February, 1830, when his sufferings ended with a most triumphant death.

Edward Pride, the fourth man on the North Carolina Circuit for 1777, appears on the minutes this year; and in 1778 he was second man on the Brunswick Circuit with John Dickins as principal. After this there is no further record of him in the minutes.

While these pioneers had been planting Methodism in the northeastern part of North Carolina, and extending their labors to the southwest, the preachers, since 1776, had been crossing over the Blue Ridge from the Pittsylvania Circuit and preaching in private houses in Stokes, Rockingham, and Surry counties.²

¹Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky," Vol. II., page 312.

²Rev. Peter Doub, D.D., in *Raleigh Enterprise*, April 30, 1866. Much of the information given by Mr. Doub was received from Rev. Ira Ellis, who lived in that period and was in a position to know, being secretary of several Annual Conferences.

In 1778, Jesse Lee says, in "North Carolina the preachers divided the one circuit that was there before so as to form three circuits, and they were now called Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope."¹ The minutes, however, only show that the Roanoke Circuit takes the place of the North Carolina Circuit, and no mention is made of the Tar River and New Hope until 1779. This may be due to the fact that the minutes were very meager at this period of the war, everything in a disorganized state, and not enough preachers to supply the circuits already in existence. But there is some evidence to show that the Roanoke Circuit existed previous to the Conference in 1778. Freeborn Garrettson in his Journal says: "In September [1777] I went to North Carolina, to travel the Roanoke Circuit, and was sweetly drawn out in the glorious work."² And yet the minutes have Garrettson during this year on the Brunswick Circuit. The most logical conclusion is that during 1777 the Roanoke Circuit was planned, and a preacher—Garrettson—was sent from the Brunswick Circuit to labor until Conference.

William Glendenning traveled the Roanoke Circuit in 1778. He was a very eccentric Scotchman, who came to America in 1774 as a "volunteer missionary" and joined the Conference in 1775, and was sent to the Brunswick Circuit with five others, "thus being one of the first to preach in North Carolina." During the year 1778, while

¹"Short History of the Methodists," by Jesse Lee, page 63.

²"Life of Garrettson," by Bangs, New York, 1829, page 60. "Experience and Travels of Freeborn Garrettson," published in Philadelphia, 1791, and sold by John Dickins, page 70.

on the Roanoke Circuit, he was the pastor of Jesse Lee, and appointed him class leader. He traveled in Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. His name was proposed for elder's orders in 1784, but was refused, as he was not deemed qualified for the trust. He at once "fell into a morbid spiritual state which soon developed into insanity." On account of the condition of his mind, he stopped preaching in 1785, and located in 1786. The Conference continued to assist him from the superannuate fund. He applied for readmission in 1792, but was not received because of his mental condition. In speaking of his condition in 1786, he says: "I was removed to one Leonard Smith's in North Carolina, in order to try what physicians could do for me. I knew, and told them, that all doctors and physic upon earth could do me no good. But they took me, and forced me there. While I was there, Dr. Smith forced me to take some of his physic, but it answered no end."¹ There seems to have been some improvement in his mind after this. Some time previous to 1805 he settled in Raleigh, where he kept a grocery store on Newbern street opposite the Episcopal rectory.² He was also a printer and publisher in Raleigh as early as 1805.³ How many books he published is not

¹"Life of William Glendenning," written by himself and published in Philadelphia in 1795, in which he gives a full account of his sufferings. He also criticises Bishop Asbury for his treatment of him. This rare old book is in the private library of the writer.

²Rev. A. W. Mangum in "Centennial of Methodism in North Carolina," page 84.

³The writer has in his library a book of sermons by Rev. Devereux Jarratt, published by William Glendenning, Newbern street, near State House, Raleigh, N. C., 1805.

known. But with all of his eccentricities, he was successful in business, and accumulated considerable property. While he was in Raleigh he built a house of worship out of his own means. Here he often preached, conducting the services in his own way. The chapel was called Bethel. He allowed the Methodist preachers to occupy it occasionally. He left the Church and joined O'Kelly in his secession.

The life of William Glendenning is a sad one. During the worst state of his insanity he suffered under many hallucinations, which he always looked upon afterwards as being real, and would often quote them in his sermons. The dark cloud was somewhat lifted in his last days, friendship between him and Asbury was restored, and he died in peace in 1816.

The Roanoke Circuit was situated along the Roanoke River, and included perhaps Bertie, Northampton, Halifax, and Warren counties. Roanoke will always stand in the annals of Methodist history as an honored name. It remained on the minutes for many years as one of the best circuits. Its members were distinguished for their piety and social position. Here "that grand old man" Lovick Pierce was born. Here, too, was the home of that silver-tongued orator, Thomas G. Lowe. In the bounds of this circuit, at the place called "the old Barn," Jesse Lee preached his first sermon. Here the first subscription to a Methodist school in America was made by Gabriel Long and brother Bustian. Above all, this was the cradle of
* Methodism in North Carolina.

It is very difficult to arrive at anything like the bound-

Tar River Circuit

ary line of the Tar River Circuit. However, it was between the Roanoke and New Hope circuits, and must have included Franklin, Nash, and Edgecombe, as they lay along the river from which it takes its name. The New Hope Circuit included portions of Orange, Chatham, Cumberland, and Wake counties. The circuit took its name from a small creek in Chatham that empties into Haw River. These were all the circuits in North Carolina up to 1780 when the Yadkin Circuit was formed.

Thus we have glanced at some of the heroes who came to North Carolina to plant Methodism within its bounds. No pen can portray the cost to them of such an undertaking, or tell of the harvest that will come from such sowing. We shall see some of the results of their toils as we proceed in these pages. The pen of the historian has never traced the labors of more devoted and heroic men than these. It was not worldly honor, nor worldly gain, for which they labored; but they had motives as high as heaven and as broad as the needs of the human race.

CHAPTER IV.

PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION.

Demoralizing Effect of War. Defense Unnecessary. Declaration of Independence. Cause of the War—Taxation—A Deeper Principle—Stamp Act. Liberty in the Air—Effect upon Methodism. Principal Battles in North Carolina. Mr. Wesley's Letter Misunderstood. Some Refused to Bear Arms. Jesse Lee Drafted—Refuses to Bear Arms—Put Under Guard—Preaches in Camp—Drives a Wagon. Green Hill. Philip Bruce—Some Incidents—Bruce at King's Mountain. Effects of the War upon Methodism.

JUST after Methodism had entered North Carolina and its influence was beginning to be felt, the excitement incident to the Revolutionary War began. This was one of the early hindrances to Methodism. War is always demoralizing. It locks the wheels of commerce, and checks every enterprise. Especially is this true in reference to the agencies of the Church which are for the moral upbuilding and spiritual progress of the people. From the very nature of war and Christianity, they are directly opposed to each other. And yet the Great Head of the Church may overrule even a bloody war, and make it subserve his purpose, in the progress and establishment of his kingdom. Looking at Methodism in North Carolina when the Revolutionary War was putting in its destructive work, the early itinerant could see nothing but the scattering of forces and disorganization. To him it ^{must have} looked like ruin and destruction to the young Society. But while it appeared thus to these heroic men who came to plant Methodism

in North Carolina, and while it did check their work and hinder their progress, we ^{saw now} shall see that Providence was directing, and that in the end Methodism was placed upon a more solid basis. In this case, as it is in many others, the Lord makes the wrath of man to praise him. ^{As Crime} For when we consider the condition of the country, the motives of the men who were the great actors in the conflict, the tyrannical measures and spirit of the government, and that the liberty and the best interest of the people were at stake, then we can see how it may be possible for the whole movement to be dominated by Christian principle. For it was a conflict between truth and error, liberty and oppression. And the colony of North Carolina needs to make no defense for being the first to take a strong stand for liberty.— It is not necessary for any one to write a line in defense of the position of the men in Mecklenburg county in 1775.) Their views were supported by those of most of the other counties of the province; and the result was that North Carolina was surpassed by none of her sisters in cultivating the spirit of liberty and independence. The question has often been asked whether she was justified in taking this bold and defiant stand. In justification of this advanced position on the subject of independence, the following are some of the reasons that have been given.

First. Taxation without representation was one of the principles to which her citizens objected. Representation of America by Americans in the lawmaking assemblies was denied by Great Britain. "Every borough and shire of England, Wales, and Scotland was represented in one way or another in the English House of Commons," while

not one was there to represent the thirteen colonies of America. And yet the crown and parliament had complete control of the most vital interest in the colonies. This the people of North Carolina felt was not right. Then, the taxes were enormous. While the people were always ready to pay legitimate taxes, yet they were not willing to pay extortions placed upon them by irresponsible officers. That a man should be obliged to pay a tax of four or five shillings annually, or any other sum, however trivial, for supporting a form of worship which he conscientiously believed to be wrong, or which was at least irksome to him, was a greater violation of his rights and more injurious in its effects than that he should be compelled to pay a few pennies on every pound of tea he used. The latter is frequently spoken of as one of the main causes of the Revolution; but, in fact, did not the other reach beyond the mere question of taxation, and involve a principle that was much more far-reaching in its effect? For the people who led in this movement were of the best element in society and in the Church.

Second. The Stamp Act was another cause of the war. This act provided that all contracts, notes, bonds, deeds, writs, and other public documents should be written on government paper which had a "stamp" on it, and which was to be sold at a high price by government agents, and from the sale of which a large revenue was expected for the English treasury. This act produced great excitement throughout the colonies, and in no place more than in North Carolina. When the news of the passage of this act reached North Carolina, the General Assembly was

in session, and immediate action would have been taken had it not been for the prudent management of Governor Tryon. However, John Ashe, the Speaker of the House, plainly informed the governor that the act would be resisted "unto blood and death." Although this act was repealed a year after it was passed, it left a bad impression in the minds of the people.

Other detailed reasons might be given, but suffice it to say that the time had come for the American people to govern themselves. Liberty was in the air. It had been pronounced in North Carolina, the same sound had echoed from Massachusetts, and everywhere the hearts of the people were responding to this cry for liberty. And why should they not sigh for liberty? Many who were making this cry had come to the New World for religious freedom: Puritans and Quakers from England, Presbyterians from Ireland and Scotland, Palatines from the Rhine, and Huguenots from France. They had all come seeking relief, and it was natural for them to resent any movement that suggested the idea of oppression.

The effect of the war upon Methodism seemed at one time to be ruinous; and, in fact, it did for the time being greatly retard its progress. We will see that it meant much to Methodism; that American independence implied the independence of American Methodism. Long before now has the observant mind been enabled to see that this Revolution meant much to the then young and growing Methodist Society in America. And as North Carolina was the scene of the most decisive struggles of the war, we will go a little further into detail than we otherwise

would, and especially so since some in the Society were so closely connected with the movement. In 1780 the battle of Ramsour's Mills, in Lincoln county near Lincolnton, was fought, and on October 7, 1780, that of King's Mountain. On March 15, 1781, perhaps one of the most decisive battles fought during that exciting period was fought at Guilford Courthouse. And from Guilford to Wilmington everything was demoralized as a result of the army of Cornwallis, which had spread dismay also in many other sections of the state.

The effect of this war was very marked upon the progress of Methodism. There were several circumstances which made the outlook very discouraging and critical to the early pioneers. About the beginning of the war, Mr. Wesley wrote a letter to the American colonies in which he exhorted them to be peacemakers, and to say nothing on either side. This raised a storm on both sides of the Atlantic—in England as well as in America. His idea seems to have been to settle the difficulty without war. His object was good, but it was not understood. He was credited with working in the interests of the crown, and hence his followers in America were regarded as being in sympathy with the King of England. This had a very disastrous effect upon Methodism in America. Especially was this true as it was known that some of the leading preachers were from England, and the people naturally expected them to be in sympathy with the English. They were here as missionaries, and while they were deeply interested in their work, and loved their brethren in America, yet they could not side with them against their native

country. Truly they were in a most embarrassing situation. Suspected of being on the side of England, it was hard for them to remain silent. And as persecutions had already arisen against the Methodists, many people were glad to embrace the opportunity to check the progress of Methodism. An able historian says: "It is no wonder that any one who wished to raise the wind of persecution against a Methodist preacher need only shout 'Tory!' and his wish was accomplished. To this disagreeable practice some resorted, and thereby gratified their unreasonable opposition to the men whom they inwardly hated on account of the spirited manner in which they rebuked them for their wickedness."¹

There were some Methodists who were opposed to war from principle, and absolutely refused to fight. These were whipped, fined, or imprisoned and punished in a variety of ways. The English, having met with several disasters in the south, commenced a retreat through North Carolina and Virginia. It is not our business to follow them through the scenes of battle in 1780-81. Our task is to notice that which vitally affects Methodism.

In the summer of 1780 the militia of North Carolina were drafted, and Jesse Lee, who became one of the most distinguished Methodist preachers in America, was forced to face the storm that was then gathering in his adopted state. Jesse Lee was born in Prince George county, Virginia, on March 12, 1758. He joined Society under Robert Williams in 1774, and the wonderful revivals on the

¹"History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Bangs, Vol. I., page 139.

old Brunswick Circuit about this time, no doubt, had much to do in developing him into a great spiritual force, and of helping him to decide upon his life work. The true evangelists are generally made in great revivals. He preached his first sermon on the 17th of September, 1779, at a place called the "Old Barn" in North Carolina. About this time the Rev. John Dickins, pastor of the Roanoke Circuit, being busy doing some literary work, requested him to take his place on the circuit for a few weeks. Here he had his first experience as a traveling preacher. In July of the next year (1780) the militia were drafted, and Mr. Lee was among the number to go. He was among those who felt that it was not right to engage in war, and hence he positively refused to bear arms. But as he was thoughtful enough to keep a Journal, for that reason, and others, we prefer that he should tell his own story:

"I weighed the matter over and over again, but my mind was settled; as a Christian and as a preacher of the gospel I could not fight. I could not reconcile it to myself to bear arms, or to kill one of my fellow-creatures; however, I determined to go, and to trust in the Lord; and accordingly prepared for my journey.

"Monday, July 17th, 1780.—I left home and set out for the army, traveled about twenty-five miles to Mr. Green Hill's, where I was kindly used. I tarried there all night. Wednesday, 19th.—I set off early in the morning, and traveled about sixteen miles to Mr. Hines's. In the afternoon we had much conversation on spiritual matters, and in the evening felt my heart more engaged with God in prayer than usual. I felt my dependence upon God, and

though I believed that great difficulties lay before me, yet I resigned myself into the hands of God, and felt assured that he would protect and take care of me.

"I did not join the army till the 29th. On the evening of that day I came in sight of the camp, and was soon called on parade, and orders were given for all the soldiers to be furnished with guns. I then lifted up my heart to God and besought him to take my cause in his hands, and support me in the hour of trial.

"The sergeant soon came round with the guns, and offered one to me, but I would not take it. Then the lieutenant brought me one, but I refused to take it. He said I should go under guard. He then went to the colonel, and coming back, brought a gun and set it down against me. I told him he had as well take it away, or it would fall. He then took me with him and delivered me to the guard. After a while the colonel came, and taking me out a little way from the guard, he began to converse with me, and to assign many reasons why I should bear arms; but his reasons were not sufficiently cogent to make any alteration in my mind. He then told the guard to take care of me, and so left me.

"Many of the people came and talked with me and pitied me, and would leave me with tears in their eyes. We lay encamped at a tavern a few miles from the site of what was afterwards the seat of government (Raleigh) for North Carolina. After dark I told the guard we must pray before we slept; and having a Baptist under guard, I asked him to pray, which he did. I then told the people if they would come out early in the morning, I would pray

with them. I felt remarkably happy in God under all my trouble, and did not doubt but that I should be delivered in due time. Some of the soldiers brought me some straw to lie upon, and offered me their blankets and greatcoats for covering. I slept pretty well that night, which was the first and last night I was ever under guard.

“Sunday, 30th.—As soon as it was light, I was up and began to sing, and some hundreds of people soon assembled and joined with me, and we made the plantation ring with the songs of Zion. We then kneeled down and prayed; and while I was praying, my soul was happy in God, and I wept much and prayed loud, and many of the poor soldiers also wept. I do not think that I ever felt more willing to suffer for the sake of religion than I did at that time.

“A little after we were done prayer, Mr. Thomas, the tavern-keeper, came out and talked with me, and told me he was in bed when he heard me praying, that he could not refrain from tears, and he had called to see me, and know if I would be willing to preach to them that day, it being Sabbath. I told him I would preach provided he would procure a block, or something, for me to stand upon; which he readily promised to do. I told him, withal, I wished him to go to the colonel, for we had no higher officer amongst us, and obtain leave for me to preach; which he did, and liberty was granted. It is just to state that Colonel —— was a man of great humanity, although a profane swearer. When he heard that I was about to preach, it affected him very much, so he took me out to talk with me on the subject of bearing arms. I

told him I could not kill a man with a good conscience, but I was a friend to my country, and was willing to do anything that I could, while I continued in the army, except that of fighting. He then asked me if I would be willing to drive their baggage wagon? I told him I would, though I had never driven a wagon before; he said their main cook was a Methodist, and could drive the wagon when we were on a march, and I might lodge and eat with him; to which I agreed. He then released me from guard, and said when I was ready to begin meeting I might stand on a bench by his tent. When the hour arrived I began under the trees, and took my text in Luke xiii. 5, *'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'* After I had been speaking a while it began to rain, and we were under the necessity of going into the house, where I resumed my discourse. I was enabled to speak plainly, and without fear; and I wept while endeavoring to deliver my message. Many of the people, officers as well as men, were bathed in tears before I was done. That meeting afforded me an ample reward for all my trouble. At the close of the meeting some of the gentlemen went about with their hats to make a collection of money for me, at which I was very uneasy, and ran in among the people and begged them to desist. I could not at that time feel willing to receive any compensation for preaching. I thought if the people could afford to sit and hear me, I could afford to stand and preach to them. I felt my heart humbled before God, and was truly thankful to him for the grace communicated to my soul at that time. I had no doubt but that all things would work out for my good.

“On Monday I took charge of the wagon, and felt very much resigned to the will of God.”¹

It is thought by some that the sermon preached by Jesse Lee, referred to above, was the first Methodist sermon preached in that immediate section. Thomas’s tavern was situated near the present city of Raleigh. From here the army moved on toward the south, “passed through Chatham county, crossed Haw River, and the Island Ford and Deep Creek, at Ronney’s Mills, crossed Drowning Creek at Cole’s Bridge, and the next day entered the state of South Carolina; and then to the banks of the Pee Dee River, where they encamped.” They finally fell back into North Carolina, and on Monday, August 28th, we find them at Ronney’s Mills on Deep River, where they remained until September 5th. Here Mr. Lee was quite sick for a few days. They went through Randolph county, crossing Caraway River, stopping for four days near Salisbury, where they lynched a noted “Tory,” hanging him up without judge or jury. Lee remained with them until October 29th, when he obtained his discharge. Here he ended his military labor, and returned home, where he soon entered his life work. Through it all he kept a clear conscience, having never killed a single human being.

However, there were very few Methodists who were so extremely opposed to war as Mr. Lee. The Quakers, and occasionally a Methodist, would take such extreme views as his. But many prominent Methodists took part in the conflict, and made valiant soldiers. Green Hill, a

¹“Memoirs of Jesse Lee,” Thrift, page 29.

Methodist minister, was one of the representatives from Bute county in the Provincial Congress which met in Newbern, April 4, 1774. He was also a member of the Hillsboro Congress which met August 20th, 1775, and of the Halifax Congress of April, 1776. Philip Bruce was a great friend to the cause of liberty, and as a result suffered many narrow escapes.

The name of Philip Bruce will ever hold a sacred place in the annals of Methodism in North Carolina. He was born near King's Mountain, December 25th, 1755. His grandfather was a French Protestant who came to this country with the persecuted Huguenots. He received his education under a Scotch teacher. During a revival conducted by the pioneer preacher in his neighborhood, young Philip gave his heart to God, and was the first of his family to become a Methodist. A holy fire was kindled in his soul that burned brightly and with ever-increasing splendor for more than fifty years. His father and mother were the first fruits of his labors. He was soon afterwards licensed as an exhorter. At this time the Revolutionary War was in full blast, and Toryism was rife in that part of the land.

"The Bruces were zealous republicans, and none of them more so than young Philip. He had many narrow escapes from the halter and the bullet. One day as he was hunting wild turkeys in the woods a party of Tories rushed upon him and made him prisoner; they were about to hang him to the nearest tree, when, in examining his pockets, they found his license as an exhorter. The captain immediately said it would never do to hang a priest, and ordered

him to be released, with a warning never again to be caught shooting wild turkeys. Unwittingly they had set at liberty one of the best friends of the American cause, for Bruce had opportunities for collecting information respecting the designs and movements of the British possessed by few in his neighborhood, and he never failed to make his knowledge serviceable to the cause of freedom.

"He was present at the battle of King's Mountain, but as he was looked upon as a sort of chaplain, the officers would not allow him to go into the engagement, and he was left with the sick and baggage. While engaged in his duties as a circuit preacher, he was taken prisoner, sometimes by the British and sometimes by the Americans, but never maltreated by either.

"On one occasion he was induced to preach to a band of Tories whose captain had gone to procure arms. He did so, and actually persuaded them to disperse. When the captain returned with the arms he found no men, and on being told through whose influence his men had dispersed, he swore vengeance against Bruce. Not very long afterwards, when he had preached at the house of a friend, up rode the captain with two of his men. Springing from his horse he rushed to the porch where Bruce was quietly reading, and with horrid oaths presented his gun at his breast. Bruce caught the muzzle and a scuffle ensued. The captain, dropping his gun, drew his sword and made a tremendous cut at his head, but in its sweep the weapon struck the rafter of the porch. Just at this moment up rode three Whigs; the two Tories gave the alarm, and Bruce finding the captain willing to be off, pushed him

down the steps, sprang into the house and shut the door. The three Tories rode off in quick time one way, and the Whigs as fast in another. As the captain passed the window, Bruce shouted, 'Good-by, Captain!' In reply he swore he would kill him. A day or two after, Bruce reached his next appointment, and although his horse had been put up, and the people had assembled for preaching, it was so solemnly impressed on his mind that it was his duty to leave the place immediately, that, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrance of the landlord, he called for his horse and rode off, leaving an appointment for another time. Among those who had come to the meeting was a preacher of another denomination. Bruce was not more than out of sight when the captain's lieutenant rode up with a file of men, and inquired for the preacher. The one who had come to hear Bruce preach was pointed out to them as the only preacher present; they instantly shot him down, and rode off, bragging that Bruce would never disperse another Tory company."¹

These incidents give the reader some idea of the trying times in which the early pioneer was planting Methodism in North Carolina. They show further where the sympathy of Philip Bruce was during this terrible conflict. As this man of God has had much to do with Methodism in this state, we will speak more fully of him as a man and as a preacher.

"In person Philip Bruce was commanding. He was tall, perfectly straight, very grave and dignified in his manner;

¹Bennett's Memorials, page 179.

his hair was black and worn long, his visage thin, his complexion dark, and his eyes bright and piercing; his countenance was open and expressive, his features well developed and indicative of a high degree of intellectual power. In the pulpit he was graceful and impressive. His sermons were usually short, but powerful, and he excelled in the application of gospel truth. His appeals were often irresistible." Philip Bruce was a very remarkable man, and a great preacher. We will cross his track many times in the course of this work.

Coming back to the evil effects of war, we find that in a general way they worked disastrously to Methodism in North Carolina. The storm of war left desolation in its track. Many of the societies were entirely broken up, and others were prevented from holding meetings regularly. It was very dangerous for the preachers to travel the circuits. And frequently when they reached an appointment the topic of conversation was upon the great struggle that was going on. The people were in constant dread. Many had husbands, brothers, and sons at the front, and often at church some sad news was broken to these anxious loved ones, which caused scenes of the most painful character. Many fell in battle, and never returned to take their places in the Church; while many others were corrupted by camp life and made shipwreck of the faith, and returned home strangers to grace. Its evil effects were felt upon Methodism in many ways; and no section suffered more than North Carolina. It was a troublous time for the infant Church that was trying to plant itself in this new field; but it was seen after the storm had swept over that the

tree of Methodism "had stuck its roots deeper into the soil, and again budded and brought forth fruit." So while its evil effects were great at the time, the Revolution brought no greater blessing in the end to any institution than it did to Methodism.

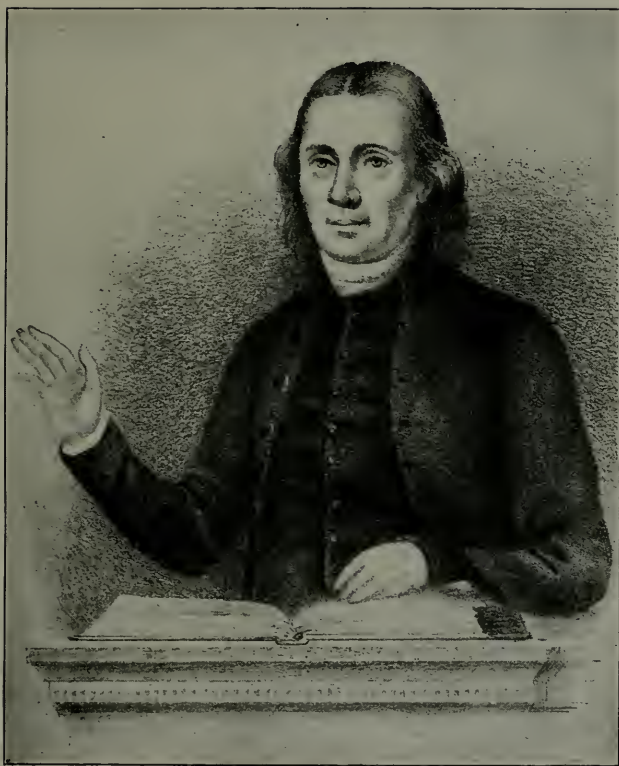
CHAPTER V.

GROWTH OF METHODISM FROM 1780 TO 1784.

Asbury Enters North Carolina—Extracts from His Journal. Yadin Circuit. John Cooper. Enoch Matson. Henry Ogburn. New Hope. Dromgoole and Lee Introduce Methodism Between Edenton and Norfolk. John Easter.

WHEN God has a great work to do, he prepares some man through which to accomplish his purposes. When he was ready to deliver his chosen people, he had Moses as his leader in readiness. When he would give the gospel to the Gentiles, Paul was ready to go. When the whole religious world had drifted into cold, dead formalism, John Wesley, having his heart filled with spiritual life, said, "The world is my parish," and at once began to preach forgiveness of sins and the witness of the Spirit. A great revival followed. And when England had become a flame of revival fire, and the Macedonian cry was going over from America, Francis Asbury, with others, responded, and Asbury soon became the distinguished leader of the great revival Church in America.

On the 7th of October, 1771, Francis Asbury received an old-fashioned Methodist welcome in Philadelphia. He began at once to travel up and down the Atlantic slope and preach the gospel as understood by the Methodist Society. Soon he became the "greatest of religious leaders." He was the founder, organizer, and apostle of the Methodist Church in the United States. He traveled



BISHOP ASBURY.

thousands of miles every year, traveling almost constantly for fifty-five years. During thirty years he crossed the Alleghany Mountains fifty-eight times. He often slept in the woods without even the necessary food or raiment. He says: "In the southern states I have waded swamps, and led my horse for miles, where I took colds that brought on diseases which are now preying on my system, and must soon terminate in death." It is estimated that he traveled at least six thousand miles a year. In four years at this rate he would nearly make the circuit of the globe.

The labors of Asbury were probably without example. "It has been asserted by one of the ex-presidents of the Wesleyan Conference—and the admission is remarkable coming from that quarter—that Bishop Asbury was in labors more abundant than Wesley himself. I see no reason to question the accuracy of Dr. Bangs's estimate, which is, that Asbury, during the forty-five years of his ministry in this country, delivered not less than sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five sermons, besides lectures and exhortations innumerable; that he traveled during the same time about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, for the most part on the worst roads, and on horseback; that he sat in not less than two hundred and twenty-four Annual Conferences; and ordained more than four thousand ministers. This is a series of great labors, to which I doubt if the whole history of Christianity for eighteen centuries can find a parallel. He found five hundred Methodists in the country when he began his ministerial labors; at his death he left a flourishing Church in

all parts of the land, with more than two hundred and eleven thousand communicants, and served by upward of seven hundred traveling, besides three thousand local, preachers.”¹ Besides all this, he wrote letters, stationed the preachers, was in a new home almost every night where it was necessary for him to entertain; and yet for all this travel and labor, in writing to Dr. Coke, he says: “All the property I have gained is two old horses, the companions of my toil six thousand if not seven thousand miles a year. When we have no ferryboats, they swim the rivers.” He rode one of the horses, and the other carried his baggage.

This apostle of Methodism in America entered North Carolina on June 16, 1780. And in order to give the reader a general idea of the condition of the state at that time, and the progress that was being made, we make some extracts from his Journal.

“Friday, 16th of June.—I crossed Roanoke (North Carolina); felt a little better, though weak. We rode near thirty miles; was like to faint in the carriage, but at brother Edwards’s felt refreshed and ease from pain. . . . Saturday, 17th.—Preached at Jones’s barn to about one hundred people. . . . Sunday, 18th.—I rode fifteen miles to brother Bustian’s, and preached to about five hundred people; was much led out on Isaiah lv. 6, 7. The people were solemnly attentive. . . . Tuesday, 20th.—Preached at noon to fifty people on Titus ii. 11-14; had some liberty among the people; they were very little

¹Dr. Wightman in “Biographical Sketches.”

affected—but the faithful, for whom I principally spoke, were tender; then rode over to Joseph John Williams's, a rich man of this world, and I hope sincere. I am kept through mercy.

“Wednesday, 21st.—I had to ride alone better than twelve miles to Mr. Duke's; when I came there, found about thirty people, and they quite ignorant. After preaching I took dinner, and in talking found three or four of them tenderly serious; gave them advice: the man and his wife have had conviction, and have sinned it away. They say it was the disputes of the Baptists that turned them aside. I then rode home with a Mr. Green, a Presbyterian; and was much blessed in reading Watts's first volume of sermons.

“Thursday, 22nd.—I rode to Jenkins's, and spoke plainly to about eighty people, and found the word was fitted to their cases; met class; it was a day of peace to me; the Lord was with me at this poor but good man's house. . . . There is a hardness over the people here: they have had the gospel preached by Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists; the two former appear to be too much in the spirit of the world; there is life amongst some of the Methodists, and they will grow because they preach growing doctrines. . . . Friday, 23rd.—I rode fifteen miles, preached, prayed, and sung near two hours; ate a little about four o'clock, and preached at Nutbush Creek Chapel (a little log house, about twenty-five feet long and twenty wide) to about one hundred and fifty people; here I found a broken society. Rode home with Dr. King; his wife was in Society. I slept in peace, and

rose about five o'clock; my heart is with God! Glory be to thee, O Lord! I had too mean an opinion of Carolina; it is a much better country, and the people live much better, than I expected from the information given me.

"Saturday, 24th.—Though the weather was extremely hot, I yet weak in body rode to Colonel Edmund Taylor's; and at the schoolhouse spoke to about seventy people, on 1 Peter iv. 18. Afterwards was kindly entertained at Colonel Taylor's. They were for ordinances here, though not heated. Sunday, 25th.—Rode six miles to the Tabernacle; about four hundred people, rich and poor, attended; had very little liberty in speaking—the people very insensible. I think these people must be awakened by judgments, for it appears the gospel will not do it. I spoke near two hours to little purpose; held a love feast; all the friends were stirred up. Then rode eight miles, lodged over Nutbush Creek at brother Reeve's.

"Monday, 26.— . . . I preached at Turner's. . . . I had liberty in the word; the hearers were stirred up; many came to hear who do not, will not, attend the other preachers. . . . I had in both meetings eighty or ninety people. . . . The Baptists appear to be very dead; their own people will not attend only on *Sabbath days*. The people are taken away, and times are so difficult that they appear to be under a judicial hardness, having heard so much and felt so little. Tuesday, 27.—Preached at William Price's; many came to hear. . . . Rode to Haw Tree; many came to hear; my text was 1 Peter i. 5, 13. I had great freedom, and held a love feast; the people were affected. There is the most religion here

of any place in the circuit, and yet nothing great. I was much refreshed, rode through the woods a blind path, to a friend's. I am always upon the run, though kept in peace; was grieved to see the distress of the people—some taken out to war, others expecting it every day. . . .

“Wednesday, 28.—Rode to Todd's, six miles: I am dejected to see so little religion. . . . I preached at Todd's to about seventy people, but very insensible; met class, talked a little, then gave the people liberty to speak of the goodness of God. . . . Thursday, 29.—. . . I rode to widow Pegram's; had about sixty people, it being a muster day; but these were happy souls. As soon as we began to sing, the power of God came over us. . . . Then rode to Captain Burrows's: the people in many places are but children in understanding. . . . I preached at Burrows's; but fear there is very little religion in this place: I was uncomfortable. The congregation about sixty people, but they were very dead; their minds and mouths full of the world. I came off to the widow Ellis's, and found the Lord was there.

“Saturday, July 1, 1780.—. . . I preached at the widow Ellis's on Heb. x. 21, 24. I was fervent, had liberty, and spoke as searchingly as I could to saints and sinners. Here Edward Dromgoole met me; and I appointed James Mallory for Norfolk Circuit, as there have been a few people kept together, notwithstanding the absence of the preachers. Sunday, 2.—I rode to Lindsay's, a rough road; had about seventy people; and spoke on 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. Now, I have done in this circuit; the Lord has blessed me in body and soul. To-morrow I am going

to Tar River. . . . Monday, 3.— . . . I set out for Tar River: after riding about five miles, I was told I could not cross Bear Swamp; but by the guidance of a Baptist friend, came through that, and two very deep creeks. Afterwards, I left my guide; we had traveled a few miles together, and talked in a friendly manner. Rode three miles farther, and was stopped by what was known as Ben's Creek; the bridge was gone, and a man said it was ten feet deep; I then made for Falcom's bridge on Little Fishing Creek; but the low ground was covered, and no bridge to be seen; lodged at Mr. Falcom's, was known, and kindly entertained.

"Tuesday, 4.—I rode by Miller's Cross Roads to Great Fishing Creek, a rough way, but got safe along, and was comforted in mind; crossed Great Fishing Creek; stopped at Sandy Creek, where I found a kind old man, brother Howell; lodged with him and spent my time peaceably. Wednesday, 5.—Set out to Green Hill's; but with difficulty I got along; but this was not all, for in going the distance of four miles I rode eight, and was tried to purpose; on account of the waters, I have ridden about thirty miles out of my way; and am now twenty-six miles from the place of preaching to-morrow. . . . I was very kindly entertained and blessed with fellowship at Green Hill's; but never met with so many difficulties as I have met with in this circuit; I hope for the greater blessings; am kept by grace, and enjoy health in this hot weather, though so far to the south; have peace of soul, bless the Lord.

"Thursday, 6.—Rode twenty-six miles; exceeding hot,

and my horse suffered greatly. When I came to the place about seventy people were met, singing and praying. I spoke on Heb. iv. 13, 16; had not much strength of soul or body. The people appeared inattentive, and their minds full of the present troubles. Saturday, 8.—Rode to Cypress Chapel; had liberty in speaking to about one hundred people. Here James O'Kelly met me; he spoke, and appeared to be a warm-hearted, good man; but he was troubled with the people about these times. At Ross's I spoke on Rev. xxii. 10, 19. I had an opening; and one Lindsay, an exhorter, spoke; an honest, zealous man: he has lost his property by these times. I have ridden near one hundred miles this week; and as severe, constant hot weather as I ever knew.

"Sunday, 9.—Preached at Green Hill's to about four hundred souls on 1 Thess. ii. 4. The subject was new, the people dead. I had not much liberty. James O'Kelly spoke on, 'Have ye understood all these things?' He raised high and was very affecting, but to little purpose. There are evils here; the meeting not solemn; the women appeared to be full of dress, the men full of news. These people are gospel slighers. I fear some heavy stroke will come on them. James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other; this dear man rose at midnight, and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, 'Give me children, or I die'; but I believe no preaching or preacher will do much good at present. Monday, 10.—
. . . I made my journey to Roger Jones's. About sixty people; God was with us; the people spoke of the goodness of the Lord. . . .

"Wednesday, 12.—I rode to Cooper's upon Tar River; had about one hundred and twenty people; I was under discouragement before I began, but the Lord helped me. These people have heard Baptists and Presbyterians, but I fear to little purpose. God assisted me to deliver my own soul. I rode to a friend's, and had great difficulty on the way; but I am kept from murmuring; while laboring for other souls, my own is blessed—have felt nothing contrary to love for some days past. Thursday, 13.—
. . . Then rode to Captain Pope's; I am distressed with the troubles of the times; and hear there are great commotions. Friday, 14.—I was comforted with brother Pope, a lame, wise, and pious man; he has built a preaching-house almost himself. Who can tell what a man may do under divine assistance? He makes a few cards, teaches a few children, and says he lives as well as ever he did in his life.

"Saturday, 15.—After spending some time in the chapel alone, I set out to Paschal's, about six o'clock; I came in before twelve. I spoke very close and plain on Acts xxvi. 18, to about thirty people, and had but little faith for them. Rode on to B. Hartfield's, about twenty miles, much fatigued with the badness of the road. Monday, 17.—I set out about five o'clock, and rode to Crawford's upon Neuse River, about twenty miles, alone; was tried at times. . . . Tuesday, 18.—Rode to Kimborough's, sixteen miles; crossed Neuse River. Many Baptists to hear; they were serious, and I spoke feelingly, and aimed at their hearts. I met brother Poythress, much cast down; the people are lifeless in religion. Thursday, 20.—Rode



HOUSES OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.

twelve miles to Tignal Jones's; hilly, rocky roads; about eighty people to hear. While I was speaking, General Hugine came in, and heard part of my sermon; he is a polite, well-behaved, conversable gentleman; we dined together. After dinner I set out on my journey; we came to a desperate creek called Northeast, in Chatham county, where the bridge was carried away by the freshet; we had to go through among rocks, holes, and logs; I was affrighted; yea, it was wonderful that the carriage did not overset; brother Poythress said the horse was down twice and covered all but his head; however, the water kept up the carriage, and we came safe through all our difficulties, to brother Merritt's. . . . Here I met brother Allen, a promising young man, but a little of a dissenter.

"Sunday, 23.—We passed Haw River, wide but shallow, bad going down and coming up; they took the carriage over by hand; then we had to travel the pathless woods and rocks again; after much trouble, and fear, and dejection, we came to Taylor's preaching-house, where they were pressing horses, as we expected. . . . I have traveled thirty miles, and could not avoid traveling on Sunday, for I had not where to stay; rode to brother Beck's, and was much fatigued; found brother Beck sick; he has a gracious wife. Monday, 24.—. . . I crossed Rocky River about ten miles from Haw River; it was rocky, sure enough; it is in Chatham county, North Carolina. I can see little else but cabins in these parts, built with poles; and such a country as no man ever saw for a carriage. I narrowly escaped being overset; was much affrighted, but Providence keeps me, and I trust will. I

crossed Deep River in a flatboat, and the poor ferryman sinner swore because I had not a silver shilling to give him. . . . Sunday, 30.—Preached at Neuse preaching-house to about four hundred people; had not much liberty. These people have had an abundance of preaching from the Baptists and Methodists, still they are hardened. . . . I have lately passed through Cumberland, Chatham, Orange, and Wake counties, in North Carolina; brother Bailey has agreed to give up all business and travel with me, and go to labor in the north. B. Allen and E. Bailey spoke at Neuse after me. I hope some good was done, and the work will survive. The people in these parts have been hurt with Calvinism; our first preachers moved their passions, and they hastily and improperly joined; and afterwards they dropped off from Society, and there was a great falling away. The ordinance places seem very barren. . . . Wednesday, August 2.—Rode seven miles to Hillsborough and preached in the house of Mr. Cortney, a tavern, to about two hundred people, on Hosea x. 12, 'It is time to seek the Lord.' They were decent and behaved well; I was much animated, and spoke loud and long."

In this itinerary Mr. Asbury has traveled through Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope circuits. On this journey he did not go as far as the Yadkin Circuit, which had just been established this year, 1780. It was formed from the Pittsylvania Circuit with twenty-one members, and Andrew Yeargan was appointed its preacher. It extended up the Yadkin River to the Blue Ridge, up the Catawba to its source, and across the Blue Ridge into Buncombe county, and as far south as the South Carolina line. Dur-

ing this year Mr. Yeargan preached in the neighborhood of John Doub's house. He and his wife belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church; but hearing of the Methodists, they went to hear them preach, and soon joined the Society. Their house was not only thrown open for the entertainment of the Methodist ministry, but became one of the regular preaching places on the circuit which was the beginning of Doub's Chapel in Forsyth county.¹ John Doub was the father of the late Rev. Peter Doub, D.D.

Andrew Yeargan also preached at another private house eight or ten miles from John Doub's, and at George McKnight's, near Clemmons ville, where an Annual Conference was held in 1789, and one in 1791. No doubt he preached at the Jersey Meetinghouse, and perhaps extended his labors down the Yadkin as far as the mouth of the Uwharrie River. Tradition says that while he was preaching at Beal's Meetinghouse, seven or eight miles northwest of Mocksville, he became very earnest and zealous during the sermon, walked down into the congregation and laid his hand upon the head of an old man, saying, "My friend, don't you want to go to heaven?" To which the frightened man replied: "Man, for God's sake, go off and let me alone; I don't live about here, I came from away up in the mountains."

The Yadkin Circuit does not appear on the minutes for 1781, and in 1782 it is reported with Pittsylvania, the two reporting a membership of four hundred and ninety-one.

¹Autobiography of Peter Doub, Manuscript; Rev. M. L. Wood, D.D., Manuscript.

This year it had for its preachers John Cooper, Enoch Matson, and George Kimble.

John Cooper commenced his labors as an itinerant in 1775. He was "a man of solemn, fixed countenance, who had suffered much persecution." He married a Miss Connor, who was converted under the ministry of Mr. Pedicord, and having a clear religious experience, she greatly assisted her husband in his work. The father of John Cooper, who was possessed of considerable property, endeavored to buy off his son by telling him "he would make him a gentleman by bestowing his property upon him if he would abandon the Methodists, but if he united with them he would disinherit him." The son replied by saying, "I intend to be a Methodist and a gentleman too,"¹ in both of which he succeeded. Another one of our historians, in speaking of the opposition of his family, says his father seeing him once upon his knees, in a chamber, threw a shovel of hot embers upon him, and afterwards expelled him from his home. His trials only confirmed him in his faith; he joined the itinerant band of evangelists, and lived and died in their ranks.² He finally moved west, and did good work in planting Methodism in that new and wild country.

Enoch Matson traveled only for a few years, and was expelled from the ministry in 1788. Very little is known of George Kimble, except that he was sent to the far north

¹ "History of the Rise of Methodism in America," published in 1854 by John Lednum, page 164.

² "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Stevens, Vol. I., page 375.

after leaving the Yadkin Circuit. The report of 1783 shows 348 members, a gain in three years of 327. This was a wonderful growth, considering the fact that this was in every sense missionary ground, being destitute of even a church edifice or organization. Much of this growth is due to the efficiency of Henry Ogburn, who labored on the circuit during 1783, assisted by William Cannon and Lemuel Green. Ogburn was born in Mecklenburg county, Virginia, and was converted in the great revival of 1776. He labored with great zeal and success for ten years as an itinerant. He was sent as a pioneer to the Kentucky Circuit, and amid savage tribes he planted Methodism, preaching to the hardy settlers, and sowing seeds from which rose the Methodist Church in Kentucky.

In 1783 Guilford and Salisbury circuits were formed, Salisbury from the Yadkin Circuit, and Guilford being taken principally from the New Hope Circuit. At the Conference in 1783 Yadkin had 348 members, Salisbury 30, and Guilford 314, making a total of 692. So at the close of the war Methodism in this section, in the face of all opposition and difficulty, has been planted and is beginning to take root in a soil that is well adapted to its growth and usefulness.

New Hope Circuit has already been referred to as being formed in 1778. Its boundaries are hard to trace. From hints obtained from different sources it must have embraced some parts of Granville, Wake, Cumberland, Chatham, and Person counties. Methodism existed in some parts of this circuit from the time it entered the state. When Mr. Asbury visited North

Carolina in 1780, to quiet the excitement among the preachers concerning the administration of the sacraments, he traveled through Wake, Orange, and Cumberland; showing that Methodism had already been planted in these counties. Among those who entertained the preachers at this early date, and who opened their houses for the preaching of the word, are Kimborough and Abraham Hill; Tignal Jones and James Hinton; Merritt Crump and Taylor; R. Kennon, White, and Harris; West, Trice, and Roades. Most of the preaching was done in private houses, though Mr. Asbury mentions several chapels and schoolhouses where he preached, and two meeting-houses, those of Neuse and Taylor's.

The circuit was served during the time of which we write by such men as James O'Kelly, Philip Adams, Francis Poythress, John Major, Philip Bruce, James White, and Henry Willis. One of the first preachers to labor in this section was Beverly Allen. According to his statement to Mr. Wesley, he labored here during 1778.¹ This corroborates Jesse Lee where he says the New Hope Circuit was formed in 1778. Beverly Allen, writing from Charleston, May 4, 1791, to Mr. Wesley, says: "In May, 1778, I began to preach the gospel. During the summer I only preached about home, but being earnestly pressed by the circuit preachers to travel, after many sore conflicts I consented to ride in New Hope Circuit in North Carolina, including my own place and some people in the county of

¹For further information, see Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina," page 249.

Wake. During the winter we had a considerable work in the circuit, for brother James O'Kelly traveled as my assistant, whose labors were greatly owned of God. Numbers joined our Society, and many professed faith in the Redeemer. . . . Since that time a circuit has been formed, now known by the name of Bladen Circuit. Being unable to travel at large, I spent most of the summer (1780) on New Hope Circuit and on Bladen, during which time we had some happy seasons; but the troubles of the war began so to affect the people that I was obliged to retire to Virginia in the beginning of the winter."

Dr. Shipp says the preachers on the Bladen Circuit in 1791 found the names of the New Hope missionaries still fresh in the memory of the people, and they conversed with those who had listened with delight to the preaching of James O'Kelly, and had been received into Society by Philip Bruce, who was on the New Hope Circuit in 1780. So that the circuit must have embraced some parts of the Cape Fear section.

Having traced the course of Methodism from the Roanoke section westward to the Yadkin Valley, and even beyond the Blue Ridge, let us now glance at its introduction into the extreme eastern part of the state.

In the latter part of 1782, Rev. Caleb Pedicord, the presiding elder, sent Edward Dromgoole and Jesse Lee to eastern Carolina, in order to travel through that section and plan a circuit if the outlook was sufficiently hopeful. After encountering many difficulties on their journey, they reached Edenton on December 1st, 1782. From Edenton they made a preaching tour through Pasquotank

and a part of Camden county, as far as Norfolk county, Virginia; returning through Currituck and the counties bordering upon the Pasquotank and Perquimans rivers. During this trip they held religious meetings in nineteen different places. Very few had ever heard the gospel preached by Methodists before hearing it from these eloquent men of God. As one of the objects of their mission was to establish a new circuit, after making this tour they drew the plan for Camden Circuit. The new circuit, however, appears on the minutes for 1783 as Pasquotank, but in 1784 Camden appears for the first time, and it remained on the list of appointments in the Virginia Conference for many years.

They began their trip from Edenton, and were perhaps the first Methodist preachers to enter that town. Rev. Mr. Pettigrew was pastor of the Established Church here, built a long time previously. Mr. Pettigrew was considered a good man among the class to which he belonged.¹ He was friendly to the Methodists, and received these itinerants kindly and permitted them to preach to an attentive congregation.

Leaving Edenton, they pursued their journey in order to find others who were willing to hear the word of life.

¹ The following anecdote has come down of a predecessor of Mr. Pettigrew. He paid a great deal of attention to his herring fishery, for which he was noted more than for his piety. One Sunday morning the following lines stared him in the face from the door of the church:

“A very fine church,
With a very tall steeple,
A herring-catching parson,
And a wicked set of people.”

They spent the night with a Quaker, the plainness of whose speech impressed Mr. Lee, who was quite a young man just starting in the itinerancy. After traveling all day, and night drawing near, they rode up to the house of the Quaker just referred to, and asked if they could tarry with him that night; to which he replied, "If you choose to get down, I will not turn you away." The blunt reply confounded them for a moment; but there was no time for ceremony, so they dismounted, went in, and tried to make themselves welcome. And indeed they found he was not lacking in that hospitality for which his sect has ever been noted, but his peculiarity was not understood. Before the guests retired to bed, they begged permission to pray in the family. "If you have a mind to pray," said the Quaker, "I will leave the room"; and accordingly he went out, closing the door after him, and left them to enjoy their devotions in their own way.

The following extracts from Jesse Lee's Journal will be interesting to some, and will show more distinctly their movements and the success of their mission.

"Wednesday, 4th of December, 1782, we rode early in the morning, crossed Pasquotank River, and came to Mr. Jones's, at the plank bridge. A little after dark, when the people, hearing that we were preachers, came and requested us to preach, and notice being given, we had about thirty people collected in the course of an hour, and E. Dromgoole preached to them. The people were solemn, and appeared to be desirous for us to come amongst them again, as they had but little opportunity of hearing preaching.

"Saturday, 7th, we attended at brother Halstead's, Norfolk county, Virginia. E. Dromgoole and I gave an exhortation. Some of these people had formerly been in Society with the Methodists, and the circuit preachers came regularly among them; but during the Revolutionary War the preachers left them, and they were without preaching for about five years; but they waited and prayed for the preachers to come among them again, and for some time they have been favored with regular preaching.

"Sunday, 8th.—At the Northwest Brick Church E. Dromgoole preached to a large concourse of people, who were very attentive, and somewhat affected. I was pleased with the congregation.

"Tuesday, 10th.—We came to an old church where E. Dromgoole preached, and I exhorted; we had a profitable time together. We then went to Colonel Williams's,¹ and stayed all night. The colonel is a man who fears God, and was well pleased at our calling to see him.

"Friday, 13th.—E. Dromgoole preached at a place called Indian Town, and I gave an exhortation; we had a large house full of attentive hearers; my soul was much comforted at that time, and I felt glad to be there.

"We then left Currituck county; crossed North River; dined at Mrs. Lamb's, who was a Baptist, who treated us kindly. We then came to General Gregory's, and at night in his dwelling house we had a large congregation, although the weather was very cold.

"Saturday, 14th.—We came to Sawyer's, and held

¹This is Colonel Hallowell Williams, who entertained Joseph Pilmoor, referred to in another chapter.

meeting; we had a solemn time, and I believe good was done. Sunday, 15th.—At River Bridge, where we had a large company of well-behaved people to hear the word of eternal life; it was a solemn and profitable time.

“Wednesday, 18th.—E. Dromgoole preached at Yeopin Church, to a large congregation of attentive hearers; we then rode home with the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew near Edenton, and spent the night with him. Our journey in the lowlands from Edenton to Norfolk county in Virginia, and back again, has taken sixteen days, in which time we have had nineteen meetings, chiefly among people who were not acquainted with the Methodists; but the general wish was that we should return again; and we so far succeeded in our plan as to form a circuit, which was called Camden. I felt thankful to God for the privilege of visiting that strange people, and I had no doubt but our labors were acceptable to God, and profitable to the people.”¹

In 1783 the following new circuits were formed in North Carolina: Guilford, Caswell, Salisbury, Marsh, Bertie, and Pasquotank. This shows how rapidly Methodism was occupying the field. In seven years, in the midst of the war, and persecution on every hand, it had been planted from the seacoast in the east to the towering mountains of the west, having in North Carolina 2,339 members in Society. The appointments for 1783 were as follows: Yadkin, Henry Ogburn, William Cannon, and Lemuel Green; Caswell, Peter Moriarty and Jesse Lee;

¹ “Memoir of Jesse Lee,” by Minton Thrift, 1823, pages 46-48.

Guilford, Samuel Dudley and James Gibbins; Holston, Jeremiah Lambert; New Hope, Henry Willis; Marsh, Philip Bruce; Salisbury, Beverly Allen, James Foster, and James Hinton; Tar River, Ira Ellis and Joshua Worley; Roanoke, John Easter and William Dameron; Bertie, Edward Morris and John Baldwin. In this list of appointments there are three men, the merits of either one of which would require a volume to record his labors and victories in the cause of his Lord. I refer to Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce, and John Easter. The last was laboring this year on the historic Roanoke Circuit.

It is supposed that John Easter was born in Mecklenburg county, Virginia. His parents were among the first fruits of Methodism in that section of the state. From this family "Easter's meetinghouse," one of the oldest preaching places in Mecklenburg Circuit, took its name. Their house was the home of the early preachers, and two of their sons, John and Thomas, entered the itinerancy. The sons may have caught their flaming zeal from the example of their father, for he was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. "When I preached at Easter's in 1799," says Rev. James Patterson, himself a gospel pioneer, "the good old man got his soul so full of the love of God that he overflowed, and he praised God and shouted until his frail body could scarcely contain his enraptured spirit. His lamp was not only burning, but was in a full blaze, his wings plumed, and nothing prevented him from soaring to the realms above but the casket of dust which contained the immortal spirit."

Dr. Bennett says: "Trained by such a father, John

Easter went forth with the dew of youth on his brow to toil for souls. Never did a man work with greater zeal and with greater success. Ten years he went forth day and night, in all seasons and in all places, calling sinners to repentance; and then, with failing health and shattered constitution, he was compelled to leave the field in which he longed to live and die. Beyond all doubt, John Easter was the most powerful hortatory preacher of his day. His word was like a sharp sword piercing through flesh and bones and marrow. His faith was transcendent, his appeals irresistible, his prayers like talking to God face to face. He lived and moved in a flame of love. A heavenly fervor dwelt in his heart, breathed in his words, and beamed in his eyes. Plain, unlettered, simple in style, almost rude of speech, he yet spoke with an authority and power before which pride fell humbled, and wicked gainsayers covered in the dust. He never failed to reach the deepest and strongest emotions of the soul, when addressing the people, and it was no unusual thing for scores and hundreds to fall down in the pangs of sudden and powerful conviction.

“The fragmentary traditions that have come down to us of the effects of his preaching and his faith almost exceed the bounds of belief. And yet they rest on the testimony of eyewitnesses, and must be received as true. Perhaps no man has ever been more signally honored of God as an instrument in the conversion of souls. On one of his circuits eighteen hundred members were added to the Church in a single year. Thousands were brought to God

under his ministry, and among them were some of the brightest lights of Methodism, both in the laity and in the ministry.

“William McKendree and Enoch George, two of the best and purest men that ever graced the annals of the Christian Church, were the spiritual children of John Easter. Had he done nothing more than to give two such men to the Church of God, this would have been sufficient to embalm his memory in the hearts of all true Christians throughout all time.”

Jesse Lee, in passing through John Easter's circuit, Roanoke, in 1783, attended one of his quarterly meetings, and made this entry in his Journal: “Saturday, 16th, and Sunday, 17th, August, I attended a quarterly meeting at the Tabernacle, Roanoke Circuit. The first day we had two sermons, and the next day we had a lively love feast. Then I preached, J. O'Kelly preached, and J. Easter exhorted. It was indeed a day of the Lord's power, and many souls were comforted.” Here three great men met, and we are not surprised that it was a day of the “Lord's power.” Easter was a power in exhortation. Perhaps it was on this occasion that one of his contemporaries says that Easter rose, after a fine but apparently ineffectual sermon by James O'Kelly, and opened an exhortation with the positive declaration that seven persons would be converted before the meeting ended. He had great faith in God, and he was not afraid to venture this assertion. “The pious part of the congregation was much alarmed, and thought his assertion bold and presumptuous. But he began to exhort, and the spirit of Elijah's God came

upon him, and the people felt as though he had smitten them with the prophet's mantle; great power fell on the congregation, and before the meeting closed more than seven souls were powerfully converted."

Many thrilling scenes occurred under his preaching. A most extraordinary display of faith was witnessed on another quarterly meeting occasion. A vast concourse of people had assembled from many miles around. The services were conducted in a beautiful grove near the church. "In the midst of the exercises a heavy cloud arose, and swept rapidly on toward the place of worship. From the skirts of the grove the rain could be seen coming on across the fields. The people were in consternation; no house could hold a third of the multitude, and they were about to scatter in all directions. Easter rose in the pulpit in the midst of the confusion. 'Brethren!' cried he at the top of his voice, 'be still, while I call upon God to stay the clouds, till his word can be preached to perishing sinners.' Arrested by his voice and manner, they stood between hope and fear. He kneeled down and offered a fervent prayer, that God would then stay the rain that his work might go on, and afterwards send refreshing showers. While he prayed, the angry cloud, as it swiftly rolled up toward them, was seen to part asunder in the midst, pass on either side of the ground and to close again beyond, leaving a space several hundred yards in circumference, perfectly dry. The next morning a copious rain fell again, and the fields that had been left dry were well watered. It is needless to say that this visible answer to prayer filled the minds of the people with awe, and gave a great impulse

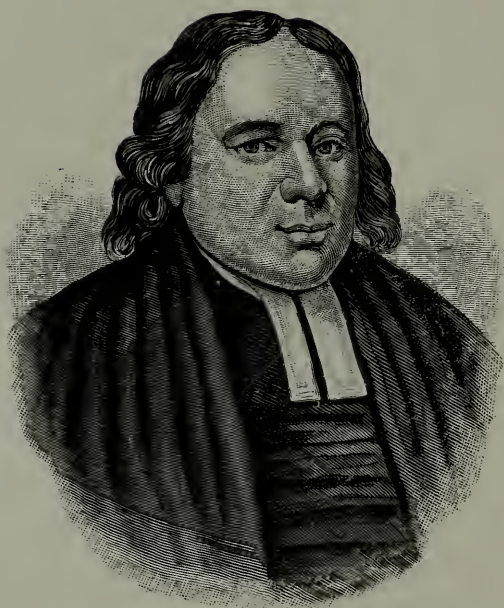
to the work of God."¹ He closed his brilliant and useful career about the year 1801. During a protracted meeting he so over-exerted himself as to bring on a disease of his lungs which terminated in death.² Like many others of his class, he sleeps in a neglected grave in Virginia, while many of his successors in the ministry have well-nigh forgotten his name.

In 1783 there were seventy preachers in the connection, and nineteen of these were stationed in North Carolina, a list of whom was given on another page. With such men as these scattered over North Carolina, we are not surprised that difficulties should be surmounted, and opposition should give way under the eloquent preaching and continuous attack of these earnest men of God. The beginning indeed was small, but every year adds strength to its vigorous life, and in a few decades we shall see Methodism forging its way to the front and taking a stand along with the foremost denominations of North Carolina.

See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesus' love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth he came;
Kindled in some hearts it is:
Oh, that all might catch the flame,
All partake the glorious bliss!

¹ Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," page 173.

² Moore's "Pioneers," page 101. Also Bishop Fitzgerald's Centennial Address.



THOMAS COKE.

CHAPTER VI.

ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.¹

In the Beginning Wesley did not Contemplate a New Church. Methodism a Child of Providence. Conditions in America made a New Organization Necessary. Mr. Wesley Consistent. The Wisdom of the Organization not now Debatable. Series of Providential Events. Conference at Broken Back Church. Question of Ordinances. Imprudently Yielded to an Urgent Demand. Visited by a Committee. After much Prayer, Harmony was Restored. Wesley was Informed of the Conditions. Dr. Coke was sent to America with Full Instructions. Christmas Conference Appointed. Garrettson Carries the Notice. About Sixty Preachers Assemble in Lovely Lane Chapel. Missionary Collection Taken. Methodist Episcopal Church Organized. John Dickins Proposed the Name. Preachers Ordained. Much Satisfaction Expressed. Important Conference in Methodism.

IN the beginning of the societies, Mr. Wesley had no idea of organizing a Church. But the conditions in America were such that it was absolutely necessary that something be done. And after all the facts had been presented to Mr. Wesley, and after looking at the situation from every standpoint, he finally gave up his previous plan of keeping his societies under the care of the mother Church, and proceeded to cultivate a separate organization for the societies in America. Circumstances largely forced this upon him, so that Methodism has often been called "the child of Providence."

¹For a full discussion of this subject, see Dr. Jno. J. Tigert's "Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism," which is the ablest work covering this ground known to the writer.

Let us notice some of the conditions that confronted our brethren in America, and which led to the organization of a new Church. The Revolutionary War had just closed. Every tie that bound us to the mother country had been severed. The very air in America was full of liberty. The colonies had become an independent government, no longer under the control of Great Britain, either in civil or ecclesiastical matters. The separation was complete before the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. So that in this organization we did not separate from the English or Protestant Episcopal Church. After the war was over the English Church had no jurisdiction here, and the Protestant Episcopal Church had no existence until some time after the Methodist Church was organized. "Hence Mr. Wesley acted perfectly consistent with himself, with all his avowals of attachment to the Church of England, when he proceeded to organize a Church here; for while he did this, and thereby established a separate and independent Church in America where the English Church had no jurisdiction, he and his people in England still remained members of the Establishment."¹ The day has passed for the historian to enter into a discussion as to the wisdom of the plan of organization or the validity of the ordination, for not only has the world approved of the wisdom, but God has set his seal to this great system of "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands," as has been demonstrated by the spirit of power which has attended it. In order fully to see the necessity of this

¹Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Vol. I., page 161.

action on the part of Mr. Wesley, let us review the proceedings of our brethren in Virginia and North Carolina at a Conference in 1779.

The whole process of the planting of Methodism in America seems to have been a series of providential events. At the urgent request of the scattered settlements in this country, preachers were sent over from England with no authority but to spread the gospel. They were not ordained, and hence not empowered to administer the sacraments. They did not lay claim to represent a Church, but desired to be considered as belonging to a religious society. Their only object was to spread scriptural holiness, to rekindle the waning fires of the Church, and to add to the number such as should be saved. With but few exceptions they received little encouragement from the ministry. Those who belonged to the societies went to the different churches for the sacraments. Mr. Jarratt, who is already known to the reader, was very friendly to the Methodists, and rendered great assistance to them in administering the sacraments. But while he had traveled extensively and performed this service as a labor of love, yet the other preachers were not so willing to promote the spread of Methodism.

So at the Conference in 1779, which was held at Broken Back Church in Virginia, they had up for consideration the question of the ordinances. These men of God in Virginia and North Carolina felt that the ordinances were divinely instituted, and are the rightful heritage of all Christians. It was certain that those who had been spiritually regenerated were entitled to the blessings de-

rived from the ordinances. Not only so, but the Methodists, knowing the clergy of that day as they did, felt that they were totally unworthy to perform such a solemn service. And it will always be difficult "to persuade a pious mind that the sacraments are more valid from the hands of an ordained wicked man than they are from the hands of an unordained good one." If personal holiness and winning souls to Christ are any proofs of ministerial authority, then the ordinances of the early pioneers, under the circumstances, were valid. And they, no doubt, felt that if God blessed their labors in saving souls, thus putting his divine approval upon their work, it was perfectly legitimate for them to administer the sacraments to those thus saved under their ministry.

Surrounded by these conditions, they resolved to meet a demand pressed upon them by the spiritual wants of a pious and pure-minded people, and by a mode novel, it may be, but not in conflict with either the positive precepts or sound principles of the gospel. Philip Gatch, R. Ellis, James Foster, and Le Roy Cole were elected, and then ordained each other, and authorized the administration of the ordinances. The most influential preachers in favor of this movement were Philip Gatch, John Dickins, James O'Kelly, Francis Poythress, Reuben Ellis, and Isham Tatum. These were good and true men. They had experienced glorious revivals even during the time of their secession, to which they pointed as a proof of the approval of God as to their administration of the ordinances.

They were visited by a committee consisting of Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson, and William Watters, who

were very kindly received. Asbury made his argument against the movement. For a while they stood firm, but finally yielded. Whether these men were right or not, in making this new rule for ordination, we shall not contend; but we feel sure that these strong and faithful men acted prematurely, if not unwisely, in taking the step they did. At least the whole Church should have been consulted before any action was taken. The result of their hasty action in the matter came near being serious. As it was, the Society suffered much. The peace and harmony which had prevailed were disturbed, and the preachers for the time being were at variance with each other as to the solution of the question. The chill of the cloud that overshadowed the Society paralyzed its energies, and as a result there was a small decrease in the membership. It is just, however, to say that through it all there was no harshness or unkind words, but many tears were shed, and many prayers offered; and it was during one of these seasons of prayer, in which Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson were engaged, that the Conference resolved to accept a proposition that led to the restoration of peace and unity. The adoption of the resolution filled all hearts with joy, and many shouted and praised God. The bands of Methodism had been made stronger, and the preachers were more firmly bound together in a "bundle of love." The compromise that brought joy to all hearts was, that the seceders would desist from administering the sacraments until Mr. Wesley could be consulted and all the conditions laid before him. Mr. Wesley was informed in due time, and it is very probable that this had as much to do

in changing his mind in reference to a separate organization in America as anything else. For at the time the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized there was nothing else to do but to organize it.

On September 10, 1784, John Wesley wrote a letter to Mr. Asbury and his brethren in America in which he recounted the facts concerning the complete separation between Great Britain and America, which had been brought about by the United States becoming free and independent. He then outlined a plan by which the preachers in America could be ordained, and their people could have the sacraments. Dr. Coke conveyed the letter, landing in New York on November 3, 1784. On the night of his arrival he preached his first sermon in the New World at John Street Chapel. The plan of organization was submitted to John Dickins, the station preacher, and some others. Coke met Garrettson and admired him as "an excellent young man, all meekness, love, and activity." On the 14th of November he met Mr. Asbury and laid his mission before him, of which Asbury had received some intimation. They decided to call a Conference as soon as possible. They sent off Freeborn Garrettson, "like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left, and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas eve." The Conference continued in session for ten days, and has been called the Christmas Conference.

Jesse Lee, who was a prominent preacher, failed to reach the Conference because Garrettson did not give him timely notice, and because of the long distance and his

feeble health. He decided to remain on his circuit and do what he could to advance its interests.

The Conference convened at the time appointed, December 24, 1784,¹ at ten o'clock A.M., in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore. Garrettson had sped his way over twelve hundred miles in six weeks, and had collected about sixty itinerants who were present. Dr. Coke, taking the chair, presented the letter from Mr. Wesley. And according to this document they formed themselves into an Episcopal Church, having superintendents, elders, and deacons. Coke and Asbury were unanimously elected superintendents.

Dr. Coke, in speaking of the Conference, says: "Our Conference continued ten days. I admire the American preachers. We had nearly sixty of them present; the whole number is eighty-one. They are indeed a body of devoted, disinterested men, but most of them young. The spirit in which they conducted themselves in choosing the elders was most pleasing. I believe they acted without being at all influenced by friendship, or prejudice, both in choosing and rejecting. The Lord was peculiarly present while I was preaching my two pastoral sermons. On one of the week days, at noon, I made a collection toward assisting our brethren who were going to Nova Scotia; and our friends generously contributed fifty pounds currency—thirty pounds sterling."

Let it be remembered that this collection was not taken in a fine city church, where there was great culture and

¹Not the 25th of December, as so many historians have it.

wealth; but in a plain, humble meetinghouse, which was without even a stove, and the seats without backs, until, in the language of Dr. Coke, the "friends in Baltimore were so kind as to put up a large stove and to back several of the seats." But while the house in which they met was plain, and many of them had faced the cold December blasts on horseback for several hundred miles, yet in some respects no such body of men ever met on the American continent before. It was a band of heroes as noble and true as ever toiled for any cause. Under the circumstances this was a very liberal collection for foreign missions. And from that day to this Methodism has been in spirit and effort a missionary Church. It was this spirit in it that caused it to force its way into mountain coves, across desert plains, and over wide seas, until it girdled the globe.

These holy men of God had weighty matters for consideration, and in the fear of God they made plans not through selfish motives, but for the glory of God in the salvation of men. And knowing something of the men and the motives that dominated them, we are not surprised that there was such peace and unanimity among them. John Dickins, who has been introduced to the reader, suggested the name, METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, and it was adopted. "There were two orders in the ministry recognized, namely, deacon and elder; and Asbury was vested with both orders before his consecration to the office of superintendent. Sixteen preachers were elected to orders, four of whom were subsequently ordained. Doctrinal symbols and a liturgy, furnished by Wesley, were accepted and adopted."



Much of the time of the Conference was devoted to religious worship. Dr. Coke preached each day at noon, "except on ordination days, and the Sundays, when the preaching hour was ten o'clock, and the service generally lasted four hours. There was a sermon by one of the preachers at six every morning. At six in the evening there was preaching at the 'Point' at Otterbein's Church, and in Lovely Lane." How much these services had to do with the unity that prevailed among them, we are unable to say. Thomas Ware, who was present, says: "During the whole time of our being together in the transaction of business of the utmost magnitude, there was not, I verily believe, on the Conference floor, or in private, an unkind word spoken, or an unbrotherly emotion felt. Christian love predominated; and, under its influence, we kindly thought and sweetly spoke the same."¹

"The new organization was accepted by the Christian world as a Church of Christ. It was composed of a body of faithful men. It accepted and administered the sacraments of Christ." The societies north and south received the tidings with great joy. We are assured by leading authorities of that period that the laity received the news with universal expression of satisfaction and pleasure. William Watters, who was the first traveling preacher of American birth, says in his Autobiography that it "gave great satisfaction through all our societies." Jesse Lee, the first historian of the Church, affirms that the Methodists were "heartily united together in the new plan

¹ "Memoirs of Rev. Thomas Ware," page 102.

which the Conference had adopted." Bishop Asbury states that every heart leaped with joy, and "the members of Society and the congregations in America embraced our Church form and order."

This was the most important Conference that ever assembled in the history of Methodism, and the work that was accomplished gave the whole Church a new impetus. The war was over. The storm that raged at Broken Back Church in 1779 had passed over, and the Church now goes out under more favorable circumstances than ever before for the conquest of the world.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST CONFERENCES.

Bishop Asbury Goes South. Dr. Coke Goes North as far as New York—Visits Eastern Carolina. Both Meet at Green Hill's—Here First Conference was Held—Gains Reported—Lively Debate—House still Standing. Beverly Allen. Origin of Presiding Elders. Rev. Green Hill. Conference in Salisbury. McKnight's. Mr. Asbury's Long Journey. Good Reports from Kentucky. Discussion on Education. Thomas Ware. Most Spiritual Conference in 1791. Conference Again at Green Hill's. Early Quarterly Conference. A Closing Scene.

FROM the time of the Christmas Conference until the first Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which convened on April 20, 1785, Bishops Coke and Asbury were busy traveling and superintending the work. And as the Methodists at that time were stronger in the south than anywhere else, they spent most of this time in the southern states. Asbury went south as far as Charleston, South Carolina. Early in January, 1785, he left Baltimore, passed through Virginia and into North Carolina, passing by Old Town, near Winston-Salem on January 22d, and on the same day he reached Mr. Hill's on the Yadkin Circuit. He then went to Fisher's River, where he preached, and continued his journey into Wilkes county. Here, he says, our Church folks were highly pleased at the step we have taken in administering the ordinances. It gave satisfaction to the Catholics and Presbyterians, "but the Baptists are discontented."

Here Jesse Lee met Mr. Asbury for the first time after the organization of the Church; and just before the open-

ing of divine service, the bishop appeared, having on his "black gown, cassock, and band." Mr. Lee was not pleased at seeing the superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this attire, but on the contrary he was grieved, on account of what he deemed an innovation upon the plainness of the Methodists in America. They both stopped at Colonel Hendren's. Mr. Lee accompanied the bishop to the south. They went southward by Elsberry's and Morgan Bryan's to Salisbury. Here Mr. Asbury had but few hearers, as it was court week. Thence he went to Charleston, returning by way of Wilmington, Waccamaw Lake, Elizabethtown, and Kinston, where he says he was entertained by Governor Caswell. And on Tuesday, the 19th of April, he arrived at Green Hill's, the seat of the Conference.

Dr. Coke, after the adjournment of the Christmas Conference, went north as far as New York and then returned, stopping at Princeton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and Portsmouth, Virginia. He then made a tour of northeastern North Carolina, visiting Pasquotank, Edenton, and Roanoke Chapel. Here he met Mr. Jarratt, with whom he talked much upon the minutes concerning slavery; but Dr. Coke says "he would not be persuaded. The secret is, he has twenty-four slaves of his own."¹ He

¹Rev. Devereux Jarratt, in a letter written April 15, 1790, replied to Dr. Coke in very strong language, and among other things contradicted much that Coke had said about him. This letter is published in Mr. Jarratt's Autobiography under the head "Series of Letters to a Friend," page 83. This is the most caustic letter found among his writings.

also visited, in North Carolina, Mr. Kennon's; preached at a Presbyterian Church where Mr. Patillo¹ was pastor; and then rode to Edmund Taylor's, where he says I found "a sincere friend and brother who is overjoyed at our late change." And on the 19th of April Dr. Coke also arrived at Green Hill's.

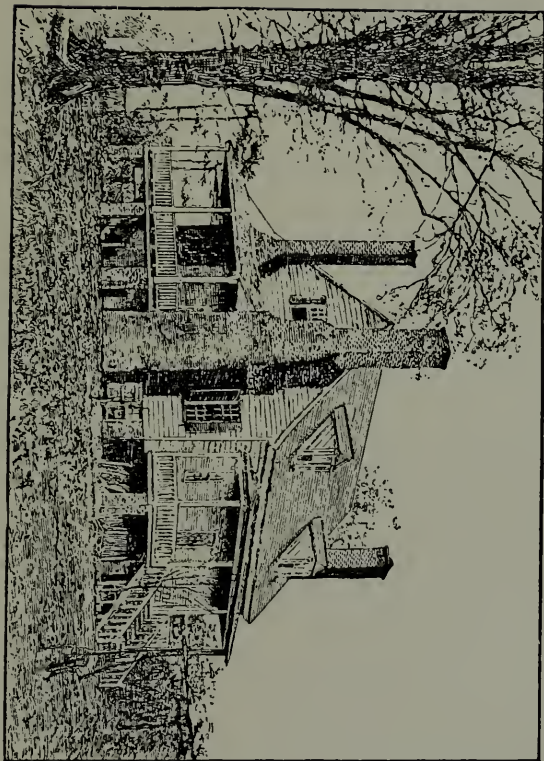
Here the first Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church convened on April 20, 1785. The territory represented by this Conference was Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. There were in attendance about twenty preachers, who had come up from large and difficult fields to make their reports. The year had been a successful one, the preachers reporting a gain of nine hundred and ninety-one members. They dispatched their business with peace and harmony, with perhaps one exception. Jesse Lee took issue with Dr. Coke on the question of slavery. The hostility to slavery was very general among the preachers of early Methodism, but Dr. Coke opposed it with so much zeal, not to say imprudent zeal, that he stirred up antagonism almost everywhere he went in Virginia and North Carolina. His manliness and courage are to be admired more than his wisdom. Mr. Lee mildly, but firmly, opposed Dr. Coke's views. He advocated a more prudent policy. Coke thought by this that Lee was friendly to the idea of slavery, and made this as an objection to the passage of Lee's character. But Dr. Coke saw his mistake, and soon "made an apology which was satisfactory, and the breach was healed."

¹This reference is to the Rev. Henry Patillo, an eminent Presbyterian minister, who was pastor of Nutbush and Grassy Creek, in Granville county, from 1768 until his death in 1801.

The house where this Conference was held is still standing, and is in good repair. It is situated about one mile south of Louisburg, the county seat of Franklin. The large upper room where the Conference sat may be seen by any visitor to this old homestead. Green Hill entertained the Conference. Dr. Coke says: "There were about twenty preachers or more in one house, and by making or laying beds on the floors there was room for all. We spent three days (from Wednesday to Friday inclusive) in Conference, and a comfortable time we had together."¹ These men did not require a separate room or a separate bed. They had not come to Conference on a Pullman car, dashing across hills and valleys at the rate of fifty miles an hour, but had come for hundreds of miles on horseback, being entertained in humble log cabins at night. They were used to hardships. And as to finances, there is no record as to whether any circuit paid out in full or not. It required but little money to travel through the country, and many of the hearers thought the Methodist preacher was sufficiently compensated by honoring him with their presence. These pioneers were heroes in every sense of the word. They rejoiced over nearly a thousand brought to Christ, and now they are reaping their reward.

Beverly Allen was ordained and sent to Georgia. He had all this great state for a circuit. He had done a good work in North Carolina. He helped to plant Methodism in the Cape Fear section, along the Pee Dee, and he or-

¹*Arminian Magazine*, Vol. I., page 346 (1789).



GREEN HILL'S HOUSE.

ganized the society in Salisbury. He was a correspondent of Mr. Wesley. As to personal appearance, he was slender and rather handsome; as a preacher, he was practical, earnest, and eloquent. Many pages have been written about this brilliant young preacher, but Bishop McTyeire tells it all in a few words. We quote what he says, and let the mantle of charity fall over his life: "Beverly Allen was now ordained elder, and began to range. He turned out to be one of those popular preachers who find work everywhere else but where they are appointed; who promise much and come to nothing; he came to worse than nothing. The bad eminence of being the first apostate Methodist presbyter is his. He managed to get up a personal correspondence with Wesley, by which he derived more consideration than he was entitled to; married rich; fell into sin; was expelled; went into business; failed; killed the marshal while arresting him; fled to a part in Kentucky in Logan county then called 'Rogue's Harbor'; became a Universalist, and went out in obscure darkness; all this within the next dozen years."¹ Others were found to plant Methodism in Georgia and make it blossom as the rose.

We would be glad to know the names of all those who attended this Conference; but the information concerning it is very meager. We know that John King, Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce, Reuben Ellis, Beverly Allen, and Green Hill were present.

Since the ordination of some of the preachers, it be-

¹McTyeire's "History of Methodism," page 357.

came necessary to appoint some of these to travel over the territory and administer the sacraments, and in the absence of the superintendent otherwise to supervise the work. Hence the origin of the presiding elder. In this Conference it had its birth. Three presiding elders were appointed, but they were called elders, and the term presiding elder was not used until 1789. This office, like nearly all the forms and usages of Methodism, grew out of the circumstances of the occasion.

Here is another character who deserves special notice in this connection—the Rev. Green Hill, in whose house the Conference was held. Rev. T. N. Ivey, D.D., in a well-written article, published in *The Methodist Magazine*, February, 1902, says: “Green Hill was the host of the Conference. He was one of the columnar characters of early American Methodism. He figures largely in Asbury’s Journal. We must regard him as one of the great men, not only of Methodism, but of the state. His name is a familiar one in the secular histories of North Carolina. He was a man of large mind, but of larger heart. There was no honorable sacrifice which he was not willing to lay on the altar of his beloved Church. He was the impersonation of Christian hospitality. He entertained under his roof no fewer than four Annual Conferences. Born in the county of Bute, now Franklin and Warren, on November 3, 1741, he was married in early life to Miss Seawell, a sister of Judge Seawell who figured conspicuously for many years on the bench in North Carolina. Green Hill was a member of the first and of each succeeding provincial congress of the state, and was

for a while state treasurer. When the Revolutionary War broke out, he was the first to enlist. He was made major in the provincial army, and at the same time served as chaplain. At the close of the war he settled down to farming, an occupation in which God signally blessed him. Without such success he could not have been the Gaius of early Methodism. He was an extensive slaveholder. The library of Vanderbilt University contains a number of his books, presented by his grandson, Judge Hill. On the fly leaf of one of them is inscribed the number of his slaves. Bishop McTyeire says he had "nearly as many as Abraham. Toward the close of the century, in obedience to that impulse which has enriched the great west with North Carolina blood, Green Hill moved to Tennessee, and settled about fourteen miles south of Nashville. . . . In 1808 he entertained the first Tennessee Conference, presided over by Bishop McKendree. Bishop Asbury says this Conference sat six hours a day, stationed eighty preachers, and all was peace. The cabinet met in a room which is still to be seen. Here for about one quarter of a century lived Green Hill. Until his life's close he continued to be a tower of strength to the community and to his Church. His descendants, scattered over several states, display in their lives the marks of the sturdy Christian character of their apostolic ancestor. He served well his day and generation, and at a ripe old age passed to his reward."

The next Conference was held in Salisbury, according to the minutes, on February 1st, 1786; but according to Bishop Asbury, who presided over the Conference, it did

not open until February 21st, and was in session three days. The weather was rough. For several days previous there was snow on the ground, heavy rains had fallen on the 20th, and the streams were greatly swollen. Bishop Asbury traveled all day in the rain, and swam Grant's Creek, and reached Salisbury on the evening of the 21st, "wet and weary." The bishop expected very few preachers present at the time appointed, but to his surprise, he says, "the bad weather did not stop their coming." From Lednum's History we learn that there were twenty-four present, and that seven of them were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Philip Fishburn. Mrs. Fishburn joined the Society under Beverly Allen in 1783. The horses were sent to the country, where they were cared for during the sitting of the Conference.

Bishop Asbury says they finished their business in three days "with great satisfaction." The preaching and Christian deportment of these ministers made a very profound impression on the people of Salisbury. Methodism was growing in the Yadkin Valley; the people were anxious for another Conference; so it was decided to meet again in Salisbury in 1787. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury were in North Carolina in April of this year, and held the Anson quarterly meeting, and preached at Salisbury on April 12th, and at McKnight's Chapel on the 13th of April; but no mention is made of a Conference being held here for this year. In 1788 the Conference met in Holston.

For several reasons the Conference held at McKnight's in 1789 deserves special notice. It was situated about a

mile and a half west of Clemmons ville in Forsyth county, about halfway between Clemmons ville and the Yadkin River. Dr. R. N. Price, in the "History of the Holston Conference," is in error when he says that McKnight's was on the west side of the Yadkin River. The Conference convened on April the 10th. Bishop Asbury says: "We opened our Conference, and were blessed with peace and union. Our brethren from the westward met us, and we had weighty matters for consideration before us." Preachers were here from Kentucky, coming hundreds of miles over mountains, through forest wilds with no roads, and through rough weather. Asbury says on the 3d of April, just after entering North Carolina from Georgia, "We have ridden three hundred miles in about nine days, and our horses' backs are bruised with their loads." And then the heroic Asbury cries out and says, "I want more faith, patience, and resignation to the will of God in all things." For heroic endurance there is nothing to be compared to the Methodist itinerancy in the days when Methodism was being planted in North Carolina.

The brethren had come from the far west, looking to the establishment of a school in Kentucky; they also gave a very pleasing account of the prosperity of the work in that distant field. They felt a deep interest in the education of their children, so they brought an earnest request from the inhabitants that a college should be erected in that remote settlement. But the Conference thought "that it was an undertaking of too much moment to justify a precipitate engagement, and the decision was sus-

pendent until the measure should be examined with due deliberation."¹ Perhaps this discussion on the subject of education accomplished some good, for shortly after this a school was established just across the Yadkin River, which was the first Conference school in America.

Another important matter was considered here—the subject of religious literature. Here Bishops Coke and Asbury wrote the preface of the *Arminian Magazine*, which was published in Philadelphia, and which was the first Methodist periodical published in America.²

Dr. Stevens says there were nineteen preachers present. There are six thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine members in the state; an increase for this year of seven hundred and forty-one. Thomas Ware came from the New River Circuit by way of "Flower Gap," and when he had reached the summit of the Blue Ridge on the border of North Carolina, he was "so enchanted that he would have spent hours surveying the scene below"; but his companion, being more familiar with the scenery, dismounted and began to descend the mountain, and Mr. Ware must follow. But he says he descended the mountain with a sublimity of feeling that he could not describe. "From this lofty eminence you see the world spread out below you, extended in one continued grove, excepting here and there a spot, until vision is lost in the blue expanse which limits its power."

¹Drew's "Life of Dr. Coke," page 212.

²It was published monthly, and continued for two years, when it was suspended. The writer has every copy in his library, from which many facts are gathered for this work.

Mr. Ware, in speaking of the Conference, says: "It was one of the most interesting I had attended. Great grace rested on both preachers and people, and much good resulted." During the past year he had served in the Holston country where he says there was "little money and clothing was very dear. My coat was worn through at the elbows; and I had not a whole undergarment left; and as for boots, I had none. But my health was good, and I was finely mounted."¹ He was sent from this Conference to the Caswell Circuit.

The Conferences for 1790 and 1791 were also held at McKnight's. At the Conference here in 1790, Bishop Asbury did not reach the place until June 2d. The Conference had been waiting for him for two weeks. He had been sick, but when he reached the seat of the Conference he says: "We rejoiced together, and my brethren received me as one brought from the jaws of death. Our business was much matured, the critical concern of the Council understood, and the plan, with its amendments, adopted. Saturday and Sunday were days of the Lord's presence and power—several were converted. We had an ordination each day. We have admitted into full connection some steady men, with dispositions and talents for the work."

At the Conference which again convened here on April 2d, 1791, Bishops Coke and Asbury were present. Perhaps this was one of the most spiritual Conferences in the history of North Carolina Methodism. "There were,"

¹"Life of Thomas Ware," page 101.

writes Coke, "in all about thirty preachers present, several of whom came from the other side of the Appalachian Mountains. At this Conference a remarkable spirit of prayer was poured forth on the preachers. Every night, before we concluded, heaven itself seemed to be opened to our believing souls. One of the preachers was so blessed in the course of our prayers that he was constrained to cry, 'Oh, I never was so happy in all my life before! Oh, what a heaven of heavens I feel!' At each of our Conferences, before we parted, every preacher gave an account of his experience from the first strivings of the Spirit of God, as far as he could remember; and also of his call to preach, and the success the Lord had given to his labors. It was quite new, but was made a blessing, I am persuaded, to us all."

The Conference met at Green Hill's for the next three years; two in 1792, the first in January and the next in December. This was brought about by changing the time of the Conference from the spring to the fall of the year. Bishop Asbury on Sunday, the 8th of January, was in the extreme eastern part of the state, where he preached at the widow Hardy's to a large congregation. Then he turned toward the seat of the Conference, and as he expressed it, "the prospect of our journey seemed gloomy." There was much snow and ice on the ground. Part of the way the road was strange to him. But Thursday, the 19th, he makes this entry in his Journal: "I rode with no small difficulty to Green Hill's, about two hundred miles, the roads being covered with snow and ice. Our Conference began and ended in great peace and harmony: we had

thirty-one preachers stationed at the different houses in the neighborhood. I find we have had a good work in the eastern district of North Carolina in the past year." It was not necessary to crowd them all in one house now; others in the neighborhood were ready to help entertain the preachers.

At the Conference here which met on December 12th there were about forty preachers present from the two districts in North Carolina. And the Conference held here on December 10th, 1793, was the last held in North Carolina in the eighteenth century. At this Conference, "the preachers cheerfully signed an instrument, expressing their determination to submit to, and abide by, what the General Conference has done." Unity and peace prevailed among them.

Before closing this chapter let us glance at an early Quarterly Conference. The minutes of such Conferences are very short—only a few questions and answers. One reason for this is that there was very little business attended to. It was primarily a religious meeting. Dr. Coke says: "The quarterly meetings on this continent are much attended. The brethren for twenty miles around, and sometimes for thirty or forty, meet together. The meeting always lasts two days. All the traveling preachers in the circuit are present, and they, with perhaps a local preacher or two, give the people a sermon one after another, besides the love feast, and now the sacrament." The quarterly meeting at that day was an occasion where much good was accomplished—frequently many souls being converted.

We have gone with the heroic pioneers up to one Conference after another, enduring much hardship, not stopping for any kind of weather, swimming swollen streams, and going over snow and ice for hundreds of miles to attend the annual gatherings. We have seen them transact their business, and then go out to penetrate to the remote settlements on the frontier, in order to tell them of Jesus and his love. Before the farewell word is spoken, a few earnest prayers are offered, and then the faithful band of heroes standing in some "upper room," as at Green Hill's, I hear them sing as only such men could sing:

And let our bodies part,
To different climes repair;
Inseparably joined in heart,
The friends of Jesus are.

Oh, let us still proceed,
In Jesus' work below;
And, following our triumphant Head,
To further conquests go!

CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION AND EARLY METHODISM, 1780 TO 1800.

The Preacher as a Factor in Education. First Contribution to a Methodist School in America. Cokesbury School on the Yadkin. Founding of the University. Publishing Interest. First Discipline. First Periodical. Sunday Schools.

It has often been said that "Methodism was born in a university." While we doubt the correctness of the statement, it will be admitted by all that the Methodist *Society* had its origin in a university, and that its founder and many of the early preachers were educated men. Yet, it is doubtful whether there ever would have been a Methodist Church if Mr. Wesley had not felt his heart "strangely warmed." The Methodist societies, after that stood more for a revival of religion than for anything else. This was their distinctive element. And this was the cause of their growth into a Church and spreading around the world.

But while Methodism in its early days did not stand preëminently for education, yet it has been a great educational force from the beginning. The Methodist preacher has been quite a factor in education since he first put foot on North Carolina soil. Judge Gaston, one of the most eminent jurists of his day, and who was a Roman Catholic in his religion, said that "the Methodist ministry had done more to improve the society of the rural districts than any other class of men, or any other class of agencies

that had ever been brought to bear on this subject." The itinerant preacher went everywhere, into the most obscure neighborhoods, partaking of their humble hospitality, and hence coming into contact with the poorest class of society. Going as he did from homes of culture and refinement, he carried with him their manners and customs. The first visit of the Methodist preacher often marked an epoch in the home. New aspirations were kindled in the hearts of the old and young, as they sat around the fire-side till a late hour of the night and heard the preacher talk of men and things that were familiar to him. Hence he was truly an educator in the home. Then as he organized churches in these obscure sections of the state, bringing the people together, their horizon was widened, and a great moral and educational force was started in the community, a force that was uplifting in its nature and which changed the whole phase of society.

The first effort to secure a Methodist school in America was made in North Carolina. On June 18, 1780, Mr. Asbury preached at brother Bustian's house on the Roanoke Circuit to about five hundred people. John Dickins was on the circuit, and Asbury in speaking of him says: "He reasons too much, is a man of great piety, great skill in learning, drinks in Greek and Latin swiftly; yet prays much and walks close with God. He is a gloomy countryman of mine, and very diffident of himself." On Monday morning, the 19th, they rose early. And says Asbury: "Brother Dickins drew the subscription for a Kingswood School in America; this was what came out a college in the subscription printed by Dr. Coke. Gabriel

Long and brother Bustian were the first subscribers, which I hope will be for the glory of God, and good of thousands."¹ "This," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "was the first project of a literary institution among American Methodists." So we see that one of the first interests that claimed the attention of the pioneers of Methodism was the cause of education.

At this time, 1780, the location of the school had not been selected. Whether the money contributed by Long and Bustian went toward the erection of Cokesbury College in Maryland or was applied to the Cokesbury School on the Yadkin, we are unable to say. No doubt it was the understanding of the above subscribers that the school was to be situated somewhere in this section. But the war with Great Britain was fiercely raging, and this was four years before Methodism in America became an independent Church. However, "the projected school for North Carolina has not been given up," says Dr. Cummings, "though the original subscription has been used for a large undertaking."² By this statement Dr. Cummings evidently is of the opinion that the original design was to establish a school in North Carolina. Perhaps the war, and the disorganized state of the Society at that time, retarded the progress of the enterprise; but some time previous to 1793 a Methodist school was established in what is now Davie county, on the west side of the Yadkin River, near Phelps's Ferry. It was called Cokesbury

¹Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., page 397.

²"History of Early Schools of Methodism," page 72.

School. In 1793 James Parks was elder on a district embracing Yadkin, Salisbury, and Anson circuits. And the Conference, which convened December 9, 1793, regarded this Cokesbury School on the Yadkin of so much importance that James Parks was taken from the district and appointed as principal of this school for 1794.

Bishop Asbury visited the school, April 2, 1794, and made the following entry in his Journal: "After preaching (at E.'s meetinghouse and at Whitaker's) I came to Cokesbury School at Hardy Jones's; it is twenty feet square, two stories high, well set out with doors and windows; this house is not too large as some others are; it stands on a beautiful eminence, and overlooks the lowlands and river Yadkin." The fact that this building was well lighted with windows made an impression on the bishop, because there were few churches or schools, in the early days of Methodism in North Carolina, that had such a convenience. Thirty years after this Dr. Olin taught his first school in South Carolina, in an academy that had no windows. At the close of this year, 1794, James Parks located, and whether he continued the school after this, we have been unable to learn. It was at any rate short-lived, for when Bishop Asbury visited the place again in 1799 he made this statement in his Journal: "I said but little at the academical schoolhouse, now a house of God."

James Parks, who was the principal of this school, married Hardy Jones's daughter. He was a very strong preacher as well as teacher. Jeremiah Ellis who was living at a very advanced age in 1889 when the writer was investigating the location of this school, and who lived in

two miles of this place, said that he went with his father, who was a local preacher, to Ward's camp ground about the year 1812, and heard Parks preach two wonderful sermons. They made such an impression upon him that he still remembered the texts. Parks finally moved to Jonesville and established a school there, and there are old people in that community who still remember James Parks. He had four sons who became preachers. And one of his sons, Martin P. Parks, was one of the most brilliant orators of his day.

The first Methodist college in the world was Cokesbury College at Abington, Maryland, which was begun in 1784, and named in honor of the first two bishops—Coke and Asbury. And the Cokesbury School in North Carolina was perhaps named after Cokesbury College, and was the first Methodist school in North Carolina, and the first Conference school in America. Bethel Academy in Kentucky is claimed to be the first Conference school, but by reference to Asbury's Journal, Volume II., page 193, on April 23, 1793, he makes this entry: "I was at Bethel,—the place intended for a school." So we see that Bethel Academy was not in operation at this time, while Cokesbury School was evidently in a flourishing condition. Rev. M. H. Moore, while on the Anson Circuit in 1886, found a Latin-Greek grammar which was used in Cokesbury School in 1793.¹ This not only shows that the school was running in 1793, but that it was a classical school at that time, where Greek and Latin were taught.

¹On the fly leaf was written "George McClosky, Cokesbury School, Rowan Co., Aug. 9, 1793."

As to its location, Bishop Asbury says it was at Hardy Jones's. The writer, while on the Mocksville Circuit in 1889, learned from old persons still living in the community the exact location of Hardy Jones's house, and upon visiting the spot where the old house stood,¹ he found the "beautiful eminence overlooking the lowlands and river Yadkin," spoken of by Mr. Asbury. Here is an old graveyard, where doubtless the dead were buried during the time the building was used as a "house of God."

It would be interesting to know more of this old school on the Yadkin, who were its patrons, teachers, students, etc. It is strange that so few of our early Church historians have mentioned this pioneer institution, which is beyond question the first Conference school in America. It began its work previous to the University of North Carolina, which was opened in 1795. When Bishop Asbury made a visit here in 1800 he wrote: "We were treated with great respect at the university (North Carolina) by President Caldwell, the students, citizens, and many of the country people. When the university is finished, I shall take notice of it." There may have been other Methodist schools in North Carolina during the eighteenth century; but if so, we have been unable to find any trace of them.

Not only does North Carolina claim that the first educational movement in American Methodism was conceived

¹This visit was made in company with Rev. H. M. Blair, who was at that time on the Farmington Circuit, and who assisted much in the research and was greatly pleased at the discovery.

in North Carolina, but that her first publishing interest was projected from this state. The early Methodist preachers realized that there was an elevating and educational force in good literature. Hence, "the Methodist Book Concern had its origin in the theory that a Church must furnish a religious literature for its people. The Church must not only be devoted, but to secure its highest good and usefulness it must be intelligent. This intelligence is necessary in accomplishing the work assigned it by Providence, and where intelligence has been allied to vital godliness, Christianity has moved forward with the steps of certitude." Mr. Wesley was a great writer and publisher, and he required his preachers to circulate good books as a part of their work. Following this example, Robert Williams, one of the pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina, published Mr. Wesley's sermons and some tracts, and circulated them where he went as far as possible.

The Discipline in its present form¹ was prepared for publication in 1786 by John Dickins, who was at that time on the Bertie Circuit. It is quite probable that he lived near Halifax in his own house, where he located in 1780. On March 25, 1786, we find Mr. Asbury making the following entry in his Journal: "Read our form of Discipline, in manuscript, which brother Dickins has been preparing for the press." This edition of the Discipline was published in 1787, and was the third edition; the first being published in 1785 in Philadelphia, and the second

¹Previous to this time the Discipline was in the form of questions and answers.

in 1786. These editions were bound up with the Sunday Service sent over by Mr. Wesley for the use of the Church in America, and were in the form of questions and answers. But the edition prepared by John Dickins was divided into sections with appropriate heads. It was published in pamphlet form, and is the most rare of any edition published. This book would be of special interest to the Methodists of North Carolina, as it was prepared by one of its circuit preachers.

The Church up to this time had no organized plan of publication. There is no record of any Conference action on the subject, until the Conference held in 1787. The subject of Church literature was discussed, which resulted in a resolution to print such books as the Conference might designate.¹

In 1789 John Dickins, who was stationed in Philadelphia, was appointed Book Steward, and with a capital of \$600, of his own money, he laid the foundation of the great Methodist Book Concern. The first book printed was "Christian Pattern," by Thomas á Kempis. Other books were published during the same year, viz.: "Saints' Everlasting Rest," the "Methodist Discipline," a hymn book, Mr. Wesley's "Primitive Physic," and the *Arminian Magazine*. The last named was the first Methodist periodical published in America. It was a monthly magazine, and this was also launched from North Carolina. At a Conference at McKnight's meetinghouse, which is on the east side of the Yadkin River near Clemmons ville,

¹"Statistical History of Methodism," page 58.

which convened on April 10, 1789, this new enterprise was started. The preface, addressed to subscribers, contained four pages, and was signed "Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, North Carolina, April 10th, 1789"; showing that the preface was written and signed at this Conference, which Thomas Ware says "was one of the most interesting Conferences he had attended. Great grace rested on both preachers and people, and much good resulted." Asbury says, "We had weighty matters for consideration before us." Each magazine contained a sermon on some doctrinal subject. Coke's and Asbury's Journals are run through several issues, and much valuable information on various subjects is found in every number. But at the expiration of two years, for some reason, perhaps for the lack of funds, it was suspended.

In 1797 another periodical was published by order of the General Conference of 1796, with the title of "*The Methodist Magazine*." It bore the following imprint: "Sold by John Dickins, No. 50, North Second Street, Philadelphia, and by the Methodist ministers and preachers throughout the United States." It was published until the death of Dickins in 1798. These magazines are the monuments to the intelligence and energy of the early itinerants.

The Book Concern did not publish another periodical until 1818, when it brought out again *The Methodist Magazine*. However, during this time many books and tracts were published and distributed among the people by the circuit rider. Perhaps the poor mail facilities of that day rendered it difficult to reach subscribers with any

regularity, with a weekly or monthly publication. But the standard works were purchased and read more at that time than at a later day. As a result the people were strongly indoctrinated, and as a rule were enabled to give a reason for the hope that was in them. The reading of such books as those carried in the saddlebags of a Methodist preacher has had a wonderful influence in the home, in the Church, and in the state. No man can at this day calculate the momentum of such an educational force as that started by John Dickins in 1789. He managed the business for ten years, and died in Philadelphia, leaving the Methodist Book Concern as an enduring monument. He died of a malignant fever on September 27, 1798, shouting, "Glory be to God! I would not give such sweet communion for all the world." The results of his labors in North Carolina, preaching, drawing the plan for the first Methodist school in America, writing the Discipline, and publishing good books to the end of his days, will not be fully known until the light of eternity shall flash over the past, when we shall know even as we are known.

About this time the Methodists began to utilize another educational force, which has been a power in the Church from that day to this; and that is the Sunday school, which was introduced in America by Bishop Asbury in 1786. Previous to this time it had become a power for good in England.

As early as 1769 a young Methodist, Hannah Ball, established a Sunday school in Wycombe, England, and was instrumental in training many children in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Doubtless similar attempts

were made before that time, but they were only anticipations of the modern institution of Sunday schools. In 1781, while another Methodist young woman (afterwards the wife of the celebrated lay preacher, Samuel Bradburn) was conversing in Gloucester with Robert Raikes, a benevolent citizen of that town and publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*, he pointed to groups of neglected children in the street, and asked, "What can we do for them?" She answered, "Let us teach them to read and take them to church." He immediately proceeded to try the suggestion, and the philanthropist and his female friend attended the first company of Sunday-school scholars to the church, exposed to the comments and laughter of the populace as they passed along the street with their ragged procession. Such was the origin of our present Sunday school, an institution which has done more for the Church and the social improvement of Protestant communities than any other agency of modern times, the pulpit excepted. Raikes and his humble assistant conducted the experiment without ostentation. Not till November 3, 1783, did he refer to it in his public journal. In 1784 he published in that paper an account of his plan. This sketch immediately arrested the attention of Wesley, who inserted the entire article in the January number of the *Arminian Magazine* for 1785, and exhorted his people to adopt the new institution. "They took his advice," says an historian of Methodism, and "laboring, hard-working men and women began to instruct their neighbors' children, and to go with them to the house of God on the Lord's day." Wesley, in speaking of them in his *Journal*, seems

to have the gift of prophecy when he says: "I find these schools springing up wherever I go; perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of; who knows but some of these schools may be nurseries for Christians?"

"Thus is Methodism historically connected with both the initiation and outspread of this important institution. Under the impulse of its zeal the Sunday school was soon almost universally established in its Societies." So we see that Methodism from the beginning took the Sunday school by the hand. To Bishop Asbury belongs the honor of projecting the first Sunday school ever established on the American continent. This school was organized in 1786 in Hanover county, Virginia. It was not until 1791 that the good Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, began a Sunday school in Philadelphia. The work did not make much progress, however, until after the Conference in 1790. At this Conference the following was adopted: "Let us labor, as the heart and soul of one man, to establish Sunday schools in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers to teach (*gratis*) all that will attend and have a capacity to learn; from six o'clock in the morning till ten, and from two o'clock in the afternoon till six; where it does not interfere with public worship. The Council shall compile a proper schoolbook, to teach them learning and piety."¹

From this time Sunday schools were established in

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 163.

many places, and were fairly well attended, and especially so by the colored population. The chief object of the Sunday school then was to give the children an education and to keep them from mischief. The modern idea of the Sunday school, that of saving souls, had not entered into the question. The requirements made upon the teachers were too great for the compensation received, as they thought; so they soon gave it up as an institution of learning. It soon became more and more religious, until the chief object was to lead the children to Jesus. Yet it has been a great educational force all through the years. This little stream, that was started more than a century ago, has "widened, and deepened, and swept onward, until it has borne upon its bosom the blessing of heaven to almost every land."

CHAPTER IX.

DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA, 1784 TO 1792.

Here Methodism First Introduced. James Martin. Richard Ivey. David Haggard. Henry Birchett. Bishop Asbury's Visit—In 1785 He Visits Winton—Newbern—Beaufort—Bell's Chapel—Washington. Dempsey and Sarah Hinton. Methodism Planted in Washington. James Hinton. Revival. Ralph Potts. Enoch George. John Baldwin. Aquila Sugg. John Burton. John Sproul. Joseph Moore. Mattamuskeet Circuit Formed. Daniel Shines. Many Located because of Financial Embarrassment. Fund for Superannuates. Days of Sacrifice. Heroines of Methodism.

IN this section Methodism was first introduced into the state; and in another chapter we followed Edward Dromgoole and Jesse Lee into this territory, where Lee in his Journal says the Camden Circuit was formed, but it appears on the minutes as Pasquotank. The next year it was changed to Camden. In 1783 the circuit had only twenty-two members, but in 1784 it reported three hundred and fifty, and appears on the minutes as Camden and Banks. This is the first time The Banks appears on the list of appointments. The large number reported so soon after the formation of the circuit is no doubt due to the fact that many who were already in the Society had emigrated into this section from other parts of the country. Little is known of many of these early preachers. James Martin joined the Conference in 1780, and was appointed to the Kent Circuit; in 1781, Mecklenburg; 1782, Ro-

anoke; 1783, Pasquotank; 1784, Portsmouth; and for some cause at the close of this year he located. Henry Metcalf was admitted in 1783, and that year served as second man on the Pasquotank. We learn from the minutes that he died in 1784. Asbury, in speaking of him, says, "A man of sorrowful spirit and under constant heaviness."

In 1784 Richard Ivey served the Camden Circuit. He was one of the foremost men in early Methodism. He spent eighteen years in the ministry, his labors extending over a territory from the north of New Jersey to the southern part of Georgia. He was admitted in 1777; and in 1778 he served Fluvania; 1779, Brunswick; 1780, Pittsylvania; 1781, Kent; 1782, West Jersey; 1783, Nansemond; 1784, Camden; 1785-6, presiding elder in North Carolina; 1787, presiding elder in Georgia, and continued to labor in that frontier field for four years, when his health failed. He moved back to Virginia, and after lingering a short while he went home to his reward. Bishop Asbury spent the night of January 20, 1784, in company with Ivey, Baldwin, and Morris. He says, "The work revives; many are brought to God; and I am comforted."¹

In 1784 The Banks appears as a separate appointment, with David Haggard as its pastor. He had just been admitted into the Conference. In 1788 he served the Anson Circuit; 1789, Halifax; 1790, he and Henry Birchett were appointed to the Lexington Circuit in Kentucky.

¹Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., page 468.

He returned to North Carolina in 1793 and was appointed to Salisbury; after which his name disappears from the minutes. He returned to eastern Carolina and connected himself with O'Kelly, "but finally joined the New Lights and died in their communion."¹ In 1789 we find the following circuits in this section of the state: Pamlico, Roanoke, Bertie, and Camden, aggregating a membership of 1,692 whites and 426 colored. Pamlico was formed this year (1789), and embraced all that territory between the Pamlico River and Albemarle Sound.

Henry Birchett, who was on the Bertie Circuit, was admitted on trial in 1788, and was a young man of great courage and ability. He was a Virginian by birth. He was reared amid all the luxuries of life, but being called to preach he gave up a life of ease for one of toil and hardship. This was no ordinary sacrifice at that day. After serving two years in North Carolina, the call was made for ministerial help in Kentucky and Mr. Birchett volunteered to go to that distant and dangerous field. In all the circuits that he traveled he was eminently successful. He had fine talents, and was an excellent preacher. "For many years after he had entered into rest, his memory was green and his name was fragrant among the people."²

Bishop Asbury passed through this section in 1784; spent a night at Colonel Williams's in Currituck county. "On Sunday, January 21st, preached to about five hundred people at Coinjock Chapel; on Tuesday at Winfield

¹Collins's "Kentucky," page 126.

²"Methodism in Kentucky," page 73.

Courthouse to about six or seven hundred, inattentive and wild enough." From here he went to Nixonton. He observes that "spirituous liquor is and will be a curse to this people." On Wednesday he went in the rain to Hertford, where he "spoke in a tavern." "The people seemed wild and wicked enough." He visited Edenton, where he found Mr. Pettigrew and was much pleased with him, and where he says he preached "to a gay, inattentive people." From here he crossed the Chowan River, journeying through Bertie, Hertford, and Northampton counties, and preaching to large congregations.

In 1785 we find the bishop at Winton, making his way south to Newbern. On the way he encountered much water. The streams and swamps were swollen from recent rains. He says, "We had to wade several deep and dangerous swamps." He preached at Newbern on "The world by wisdom knew not God." He says, "The Assembly was in session, and some of the members were friendly." Wednesday, 21st December—"Sailed down to Beaufort and preached in the church: the people were kind, but have very little religion." The church referred to was "a quaint, old-fashioned affair" that belonged to the Established Church, but after the Revolutionary War was used by the preachers of the different denominations, and also used for school purposes."¹

After preaching, the bishop pushed down to the Straits, and on the next day preached at Straits Chapel; returned to Beaufort and preached again, after which he sailed

¹Rev. R. F. Bumpass in Conference Historical Publication, page 91.

back to Colonel Bell's. Colonel Bell, his wife, and her sister were the first Methodists in all this section; and in the great revival that swept over this country in the early part of the nineteenth century, his two sons, Caleb and Jacob, were gloriously converted, called to preach, joined the Conference, and wielded a wonderful influence for good both in this country and in the west. Bell's Chapel was one of the first Methodist meetinghouses in all that section.

On Saturday and Sunday, December 24th and 25th, the bishop held a quarterly meeting at Swansbury, where he says they had "many people," but "little religion." It has been asserted that Bishop Asbury organized a society in Washington as early as 1784, but he makes no mention of stopping in that vicinity at so early a date. However, there were Methodists in the village about that time; and if not organized before, it was taken into Pamlico Circuit in 1789.

Before the Revolutionary War, among the first converts of the Methodist preachers on Deep River were Dempsy and Sarah Hinton. Previous to this time they had been strict disciples of another and a more accommodating creed. They became at once very zealous in spreading their new-found faith. About this time the quiet of the country in the Deep River section was broken up by frequent depredations of the Tories. Dempsy Hinton felt much alarmed at the repeated trespasses of these royal robbers, and believed that it was unsafe for him longer to remain under his own roof. In looking for some retired place of safety, he selected the then small

town of Washington, where he located. An old manuscript says he found no religious organization there. However that may be, Dempsy and Sarah Hinton carried their "household gods" with them. The story of the cross was told in Methodistic fashion, and the cold, irreligious social life of the town began to give way under the influence of the spiritual life and earnest exhortations of the Hinton family.

As soon as they had completed arrangements for their temporal welfare, they erected their altar and then gave the banners of Methodism to the breeze. They did not seek the rich and influential of the town, but toiled with the honest poor, to lead them to Christ. The songs of Zion as sung by these earnest people attracted much attention. The fire soon spread to the neighborhoods of New Hope, Little and Durham's creeks. Thus was Methodism planted in the beautiful little city on the Pamlico; and Dempsy and Sarah Hinton were its first stand-bearers.

We are not surprised that such a family should give an itinerant preacher to early Methodism. James Hinton was admitted on trial in 1783, and appointed to the Salisbury Circuit; 1784, Wilmington; 1785, Halifax; and located in 1786. He was a son of Dempsy and Sarah Hinton, and it has been stated that he "early wore himself out in the vineyard of his Master."

Sarah Hinton soon became the chief corner stone of the society. Her light shone out in the community as from a hilltop. Her liberality and charity were bounded only by her ability. She not only gave of her means, and sang

and prayed, but she would exhort most earnestly on every possible occasion. What such godly women have done for Methodism eternity alone will reveal.

This faithful little band toiled on with but slight encouragement until 1791, when they were visited with the first revival that had ever come upon the town. It was considered a great revival. Many of the old settlers of the place professed religion and joined the Society, which was greatly strengthened financially and every other way. Methodism had a high social standing at once. Converts were active in church work, and many were ready to render any service.

This great revival was followed by a reaction that was calculated to stagger the most faithful. There was much apostasy even among the leading characters of the Church. Among the backsliders were a class leader and an exhorter. Men had been put in as leaders for their social standing without much regard to their piety. At this critical moment two men moved into the town, and their arrival resulted largely in the salvation of Washington. Ralph Potts came from Portsmouth, Virginia, and Thomas Roberson from England. He was a member of the Wesleyan Connection, and when he reached Washington he united at once with the Society. Methodism in Washington owes more to Ralph Potts than to any other one man. In 1798 the first meetinghouse was erected by Ralph Potts, who purchased the lot and built the house almost unaided by any other person; and in June, 1806, he deeded it to the Methodist Episcopal

Church.¹ The church was located on the east side of Market street, near the courthouse. Bishop Asbury visited the place in 1801, and he speaks of the "handsome chapel thirty feet square." He made another visit to Washington in 1802, and refers to the "hospitable shelter of Ralph Potts, where we had all things richly to enjoy." He further says: "I judged it highly expedient that Roanoke and Pamlico circuits should be divided, and that Washington should have Sabbath preaching every week: it is a growing town of one hundred houses, and there is a good house for public worship."

The Pamlico Circuit, which was formed in 1789, had for its preachers in 1790 Henry Ledbetter and Enoch George, who was afterwards made bishop. Mr. George, in speaking of this circuit and his work there, says: "I soon heard that Pamlico Circuit, extending from Pamlico to Roanoke Sound, and embracing as sickly a region as any in North Carolina, was to be the sphere of my labor. This sudden transition, from the foot of the Black Mountain to the margin of the sea, tried my faith; especially when I was chilled by agues, burned by fevers, and, in sickness or health, beclouded by mosquitoes. Here I labored until my friends had to assist me in mounting and dismounting my horse. Thus I was made partaker in the affliction of my brethren. My friends advised me to spend a few weeks in a more congenial climate, that my health be restored; and in a short time, by the good hand of my God upon me, I was able to travel my circuit. We

¹The deed is recorded in book 8, page 177, in Clerk's office at Washington.

had some gracious visitations; and when our members professed the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, the horrid monster Persecution reared his head, and vented his rage."¹

The enthusiasm of the Methodists often brought out opposition, and occasionally the persecutor would arise and for a time cause much excitement. Methodism, being a revival of spiritual life, was naturally opposed by those who had nothing but a form of Christianity. This class, at the time George traveled the Pamlico Circuit, predominated in eastern Carolina. Mr. George gives an instance of persecution in that section:

"A minister stirred up his vestrymen and friends to expel the Methodists from an old church in which they had worshiped God. To accomplish their design, a number of gentlemen (so called) placed themselves within the altar, armed with heavy bludgeons, and their leader stood behind me in the window; and when the service commenced, he ordered us to depart, as we were dissenters from the Church. An old man who was zealous for Methodism arose and commanded silence, saying that in the days of our Lord men would not believe on him, though he cast out devils and did many marvelous works. The persecutor replied, 'Let that man cast out devils and I will believe in him.' The champion of Methodism replied to this, with some severity, 'Sit down, and listen to the word of the Lord, and it may be he will cast many out of you.' By this I perceived they were prepared for carnal war-

¹*Methodist Magazine*, Vol. XII., page 132.

fare, and for the sake of peace I begged my friends to follow me, and we retired and finished our service under the canopy of heaven. These things which happened unto us fell out rather to the furtherance of the gospel; and the bitter envying and strife in the minister received its reward. Religion spread, and the enemy passed his church without a congregation. Thus he and his were filled with their own ways."

This year (1790) Contentney Circuit appears on the minutes for the first time, with John Baldwin as pastor. This soon became one of the best circuits in that section of the state. It embraced portions of Green, Pitt, Craven, Lenoir, and Wayne counties. The circuit was named for a creek running through that section. At this time most of the preaching was done in private houses. Among the first meetinghouses built in this circuit were Spain's meetinghouse near Greenville and Rainbow meetinghouse about six miles southeast of the present town of Snow Hill.

Of the pastor, Rev. John Baldwin, little is known. He was admitted into the Conference in 1782, and appointed to South Branch; 1783, Bertie; 1784, Yadkin; 1785, Wilmington; 1786, Guilford; 1787, New Hope; 1788, Salisbury; 1789, Holston; 1790, Contentney; 1791, Amelia; 1792, Brunswick; 1793, Sussex; Book Steward from 1794 until he located in 1798. We would judge from the list of appointments served that he was a man of more than ordinary ability.

In 1791 Aquila Sugg was appointed to the Contentney Circuit. A writer in the *Christian Advocate*¹ says, "He

was an excellent man, and his labors were blessed." Another, in describing him, informs us that "he was about the medium size; of a feeble constitution; plain and neat in his dress; courteous in his manners, and instructive in his conversation with others"; that he was also "an easy, natural, and graceful preacher, and seldom failed to command the undivided attention of his hearers." He was admitted on trial in 1788 and appointed to Gloucester, in Virginia. The two following years he traveled on the Great Pedee and Edisto circuits, in South Carolina. In 1791 he was appointed to the Contentney Circuit; 1792, to Salisbury; 1793, New Hope; 1794, Trent; 1795, transferred to Kentucky. His health was already beginning to fail, so after trying to pursue his work for two years, he became convinced that it was necessary for him to retire from the itinerancy. He located in 1797. Judge Scott says of him, "He retires from the active duties of a work dearer to his heart than life itself."

During this year (1791) John Burton began his ministerial career on the Bertie Circuit. "In appearance, Mr. Burton was tall and slender. His piety was fervent, and he was zealous and effective in his ministerial labors. His preaching was plain, sound, and both theoretical and practical."² After spending a year on this circuit, the three following years he traveled in Virginia. In 1795 he transferred to the west, as so many others did, and was appointed to Salt River Circuit in Kentucky. In 1800 he

¹John Carr, in *Christian Advocate*, February 12, 1857.

²"Methodism in Kentucky," Vol. I., page 184.

returned to the Virginia Conference, and, after traveling successively the Sussex, Mecklenburg, and Greenville, the Portsmouth and Brunswick circuits, he was sent to the Richmond District as presiding elder. In 1805 he served the Norfolk District; 1806, Salisbury District; 1807-8, Newbern District; 1809, Norfolk District; 1810-12, Raleigh District; 1813, Tar River District. At the close of this year he located. Mr. Burton was held in high esteem by his brethren, as is shown by his frequent elections to high positions of trust. He was a member of the General Conferences of 1804, 1808, and 1812.

Pamlico is served this year by John Sproul and Joseph Moore, both earnest and successful workers. The career of the former was short, but active. He was admitted in 1790 and appointed to the Salisbury Circuit; 1791, Pamlico; 1792, Caswell; and during this year he died suddenly. The minutes have this to say of him: "John Sproul, a simple, honest man, who gave himself wholly to God and his work; but was suddenly taken from toil to rest; though he was weak in body, he was fervent in spirit; and we venture to hope, though surprised by death, he went in peace to his eternal home."

Joseph Moore gave a long and faithful service to the Church. He was born in Virginia in 1767, but in his early childhood was removed to Rutherford county in North Carolina. He had early religious training, and was licensed to preach in his nineteenth year. He began his itinerant career on the Pamlico Circuit in 1791. Mr. Moore was active in body and vigorous in mind. The next year he served Yadkin. For fifteen years he received

appointments regularly at the hands of the appointing power; but in 1806 he asked for and obtained a location. As a local preacher he rendered much service to the Church. In 1826 he reëntered the South Carolina Conference, and was appointed to Lincoln Circuit. He gave eight years more to the itinerant ministry, and sustained a superannuated relation until his death, which occurred on February 14, 1851.

In 1791 the Pamlico Circuit was divided, cutting off the eastern part and forming the Mattamuskeet Circuit. It no doubt took its name from the Lake in Hyde county. Daniel Shines was its first pastor. From the information we have, he only served in the itinerancy for five years, locating in 1795. During this time he filled the following appointments: West New River, Mattamuskeet, Goshen, and Roanoke.

It is sad to see so many valuable men dropping out of the itinerancy. Of course it is understood that this is due to the lack of a support. It was almost impossible for a married man to do the work of the itinerant ministry. This was one of the great problems of the early Church, how to hold these valuable men in the itinerant ranks. Losing these experienced men greatly retarded the progress of the Church. During the four years, between the General Conference of 1792 and that of 1796, the Church lost by location one hundred and six preachers. During the Revolutionary War, Congress for a long time neglected to provide a pension for those who should remain in the service through the war, and many of the best officers left when their experience and ability rendered it

most desirable to keep them in it. This distressed General Washington, who remonstrated with Congress, saying, "I can procure plenty of officers, but they could not supply the places of the old ones." He urged that it was unreasonable to expect men to spend their lives in the public service and sacrifice the means of acquiring a support for old age, and make no provision for their support.¹

If this is true of a soldier who serves for a few years in the service of his country, how much stronger the argument for the care of these itinerants who gave their lives for the cause they represented, and never received more than a bare support. The Conference realized the necessity of providing at least a partial support for those preachers who wore themselves out in its service. The General Conference of 1800 decided to continue the salary of a preacher after he had been placed upon the superannuate list. Previous to the General Conference in 1792 the preacher was only paid \$64 a year, but at this Conference it was decided to allow him, in addition to his salary, his traveling expenses; such expense to include "ferriage, horseshoeing, and provisions for themselves and horses on the road, when they necessarily rode a distance. Another new rule was made allowing the preacher to receive money for performing the marriage ceremony, though he was to make no charge. He was also forbidden to receive anything for administering the ordinance of baptism or burying the dead.

The mercenary reputation of the clergy in the Estab-

¹ "Life of Ware," page 223.

lished Church had driven these Methodist preachers to the other extreme. For many years they suffered the inconveniences brought about by these meager salaries. The object of these rules, in giving each preacher an equal salary, meager as it was, is based upon a worthy motive. As stated by one of our historians, the object was "to keep all the preachers as nearly on an equal footing as possible in their money matters, that there might be no jealousies or envyings among us; but that we, like brethren of the same family, might all labor together in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The cause of many of the locations was not a lack of zeal or love for the work, but necessity forced it upon them. There never was a more consecrated set of men than these early itinerants. They went forward with an ambition only to build up the Church and glorify God. And many of those who located taught school for a year or two to replenish their purses a little, and then returned to the work that they loved above everything else.

The allowance was not only small, but often it was not paid in full. Rev. James Patterson, who served as an itinerant in the period of which we write, said in the *North Carolina Christian Advocate*, October, 1857: "At a Conference in Virginia, in the year 1799, I saw two preachers who had worked out their year and had only received thirty dollars each, and one of them had lost his horse; and means to supply deficiencies were so scant that they got very little aid; however, they did not flinch, but braved the storm and went on to their work." At that same Conference the Rev. Enoch George was reported to

be in great destitution, and was helped by every member of the Conference.

These were days of sacrifices and devotion. The preachers were doing all they could to live on the small amount allowed, and eternity alone will reveal what the holy women of early Methodism did in helping these men of God to bridge over many financial embarrassments. Clothing was high, and these good women made many articles of clothing with their own hands to supply the needs of this persecuted and poorly paid set of men. If it had not been for such timely aid, many others would have been forced to give up their work. In addition to this material help, they gave inspiration to many a tired and worn itinerant by their sympathy and prayers. When the final account is summed up, it will be found that these heroines of early Methodism in North Carolina will share largely in the results that have been accomplished through the decades of the past, as they will in the final results on the last day.

CHAPTER X.

DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONTINUED, 1792 TO 1800.

North Carolina Furnished Much for Other States. Stephen Brooks. Edenton—Dr. Coke's Description. Bishop Asbury at Elizabeth City and Camden—Difficulty of Establishing Methodism. Goshen Circuit. William Ormond—Ormond's Chapel. Salem in Wayne County. William Bellamy. Samuel Ansley. Jeremiah Norman. Pamlico Circuit. William Wilkerson. Thomas Easter on Goshen Circuit. Newbern Growing—Asbury's Description. Tarboro has a Neat Chapel. John Sale—Triumphant Death. Christopher S. Mooring. Death of William Easley. A Summary.

IN studying the history of Methodism in North Carolina, one is often impressed with the fact that the state has furnished so many valuable preachers for other sections. The great majority of the heroic men who laid the foundations of Methodism in the great West were from North Carolina and Virginia. Any one who has not observed this would be surprised if he were to see a list of those who went west in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth.

Among this number we find the name of Rev. Stephen Brooks, who was born on Cape Hatteras, February 18, 1764, but was reared in Hyde county near Mattamuskeet Lake. He was brought up a High-churchman, was educated for a seafaring life, spent some time at sea, and obtained a captain's commission. While in his youth, he became convicted of sin through the efforts of a young

Methodist minister. His son, Rev. Jacob F. Brooks, thought that the Methodist preacher referred to was probably Israel Watson. At any rate the arrow had pierced his heart, and one night while alone in his father's corn-field he obtained the pardon of his sins, but did not let it be known at the time. One night soon after, there was a prayer meeting at his father's house, a custom of early Methodism, and during its progress he was observed to be under religious excitement; he was called on to pray, and during that prayer his father, mother, brothers, and sisters were awakened, obtained religion, and afterwards joined the Methodist Church. He soon obtained license to preach and entered the work of the ministry. In 1789 he was admitted into the Conference, and immediately set out in company with Bishop Asbury for Kentucky. He labored in East Tennessee until his health failed, but lived a long and consecrated life, during which time he led many souls to Christ and was a blessing to thousands. He died in 1855.

Edenton is one of the oldest towns in the state, but as late as 1785 it had not been taken into the circuit. Dr. Coke, on March 23, 1785, visited the place, and has this to say of the town and its people: "I went to Edenton, a most wicked place. Here Mr. Pettigrew preaches. The people in general seemed to prefer the courthouse, which is an elegant place, so I went there accordingly, and preached to a large congregation. The preachers ought really to take this place into their plan, and there is a person who will receive them. There seemed nothing but dissipation and wickedness in the tavern at which I put

up, and yet the landlord would take nothing for my dinner. In the afternoon I rode with brother Dameron, one of our preachers who came to meet me, to Mrs. Boyd's, a widow lady who came to Edenton to hear me. She lives about seven miles off on my way, and has good desires. I suppose Mr. Pettigrew does as much good in Edenton as a little chicken."¹

Soon after this, Edenton was embraced in the Camden Circuit. But Methodism for many years made but little headway in Edenton. Dr. Coke's supposition that Mr. Pettigrew did about as much good there "as a little chicken" was no great exaggeration; for we learn from a manuscript history of Methodism in Edenton, by Rev. Overton Bernard, that in 1808 "the old Episcopal church had long been in a ruinous condition, its walls well-nigh tumbling to the ground, the floors torn up, and the sacred stand not having been occupied by a minister of the gospel for years." At this time there was no church building in town. The people were respectful to religion, but did not seem to care for things pertaining to their spiritual welfare.

Bishop Asbury was at Elizabeth City and Camden in 1804, and makes the following statement, after preaching at the courthouse: "Many heard, but few felt. I dined with Mr. Mitchell, a lone Methodist from Cornwall, Great Britain; Lot in Sodom. The site of this place is beautiful for its land and water prospects; and the situation is good for trade. We rode on to Camden, and had to beg a lodg-

¹*Arminian Magazine*, 1789, page 341.

ing of Mr. Joseph Sandlin, who belongs to the Baptists; these people carry the day here in respectability and numbers." Thus it will be seen how difficult it was for Methodism to plant itself in this section that had been occupied for so many years by others; for it will be remembered that the Quakers began to preach here a hundred years before the Methodist preacher entered the state.

In 1792 Goshen Circuit appears on the minutes, with Wiley and William Beaufort as its preachers. It embraced Beaufort on the east, and extended as far west as Sampson.¹ New River Circuit was formed in 1785, embracing Onslow, Jones, Carteret, Craven, and at least parts of Lenoir and Duplin. In 1792 it was divided, forming Goshen and Trent. New River Circuit took its name from a stream in Onslow county. It was called East New River after 1789, to distinguish it from New River west of the Blue Ridge. The principal part of Trent Circuit was in Jones and Lenoir counties.

William Ormond, who served on the Goshen Circuit in 1792, was no ordinary man. During the twelve years spent in the itinerant service, he made an impression upon the Church that time will not efface. He was born December 22, 1769, near Kinston, North Carolina. He was converted when he was eighteen years old, admitted into the Conference in 1791, and appointed to the Tar River Circuit. In 1792 he served Goshen; 1793, Pamlico; 1794, New Hope; 1795, Sussex; 1796, Trent; 1797, Roanoke; 1798, Portsmouth; 1799, Washington, Georgia; 1800,

¹Asbury's Journal, Vol. II., page 284.

Tar River; 1801, Brunswick; 1802, Salisbury; 1803, Norfolk and Portsmouth. During his stay here, the yellow fever began its deadly work. While its victims were falling on every hand, he wrote a letter to a friend: "I expect to continue upon my station, for it appears I cannot well leave at this time. I might as well die of the fever as of any other affliction, and there is as direct a passage from Norfolk to heaven as from any other part of the globe. I have no widow to weep over my lifeless body, no babes to mourn for a father, and I find this world a dangerous and troublesome place." He died with the shout of victory upon his lips on October 30th, 1803.

He was a man who had great power in the pulpit. While on the Salisbury Circuit in 1802, he was assisting Daniel Asbury in a revival on the Yadkin Circuit, of which Daniel Asbury wrote: "After brother Ormond's sermon, under prayer, the Lord displayed his power in an increasing manner." The minutes tell us that "he left a legacy to the Conference, another to build a house for God, in the neighborhood of his nativity." The church was built, and "Ormond's Chapel" will forever perpetuate the memory of the heroic and sainted William Ormond. This chapel is located between Kinston and Snow Hill.

It is interesting to note the origin and growth of some of these early Methodist churches. Salem, in what now is Wayne county, has an interesting history. Daniel Dean removed from Virginia and settled in Wayne county on Stony Creek. In 1786 he became very much concerned about religion, and remembering the Methodist meetings he had attended in Virginia, when he was less interested

than now, decided to make a visit to Virginia in order to again have the way of life pointed out to him by these earnest preachers of the gospel. He did so, heard the preaching and experienced the forgiveness of sins. When he returned home, he was shouting the praise of his new-found Saviour. Soon a small log meetinghouse was built on the west side of Stony Creek, and called "Dean's meetinghouse." "This house was very rudely constructed of logs with the bark on; a hole was cut near the stand for a window, and another for a door, but no door or window was ever put in."¹ "Some years after, the little class which had been formed at Dean's was removed to Sarah Howell's, about two miles west, and near where the present Salem Church stands." Here they had almost a constant revival. It was a shouting band of Christians. William Bellamy often officiated here. A new building was erected in 1810, and was called Salem.

We find William Bellamy on the Contentney Circuit in 1793, a rising young man of more than ordinary ability. He was admitted into the Conference in 1791 and appointed to Bladen; 1792, Guilford; 1793, Contentney; 1794, Bladen; 1796, located. He soon returned to the itinerancy and served for a few years. In 1821 we find him a leader among the local preachers in the Roanoke District, and was acting as president of the District Conference of local preachers when an address was sent to the Virginia Conference opposing the grounds taken by the General Conference "to enact special rules for their gov-

¹Colonel W. S. G. Andrews, in the *North Carolina Christian Advocate*, February 29, 1855.

ernment without their consent." So when the Methodist Protestant Church was organized, he went with it, and was one of its strongest men. He lived to a ripe old age, and died honored and respected by all who knew him.

William Bellamy collected material to write a history of reform in the "Old Roanoke District," but died before the work had been completed. It was suggested that Rev. John Paris write the contemplated history, which he did, and published it in 1849, as the "History of the Methodist Protestant Church."

Samuel Ansley served Contentney in 1794. Of him we know nothing more than the list of appointments showing where he served. He was admitted in 1791, and serving the Tar River Circuit in 1795, his name disappeared from the minutes.

In 1794 Jeremiah Norman was appointed to Pamlico Circuit. This was a large circuit. It extended from Williamston through a part of Martin, Washington, and Tyrrell to Alligator River. Jeremiah Norman was admitted into the Conference in 1792 and sent beyond the Blue Ridge, where he remained two years. He then returns to the Pamlico Circuit. Within the bounds of this circuit he was reared, and now had several brothers and sisters living here. He took no regular work for the next three years, but spent the time in this section of the state giving singing lessons."¹ He reëntered the itinerancy, and spent four years in the South Carolina Conference.

¹Mr. Norman kept a diary extending through 1793-1801. The author consulted this old manuscript, which was in the possession of Dr. S. B. Weeks.

During this year (1794) William Wilkerson was on the Camden Circuit. It was his second year in the itinerancy, having served the previous year on Orange. In 1795 he was on the Guilford, 1796 the Swannanoa, 1797 the Caswell, and 1798 the Gloucester circuits. In the midst of his labors on the Gloucester Circuit he died in 1799. He appeared to live daily in communion with Christ. "His preaching was greatly blessed in the conversion of souls, and in the building up of the Church. He was seized with a bilious fever, which proved fatal in a few days. His death was as triumphant as his life had been holy. His last hours were spent in reciting his experience and labors as a Christian minister." He had no fear of death, but "joyfully welcomed the moment of release from the sorrows of earth."

Thomas Easter was on the Goshen Circuit in 1795. He was a native of Virginia. His parents were among the first fruits of Methodism on Brunswick Circuit, and after them one of the oldest churches in that section, Easter's meetinghouse, was named. He had a brother, John Easter, who was one of the most eloquent preachers of early Methodism. Thomas was not so well known, but he was a man of earnestness, and wielded an influence for good wherever he went. He located in 1796.

At this time Newbern was growing rapidly into a prominent appointment. Bishop Asbury visited the place in December, 1796, and makes the following note in his Journal: "This is a growing place. Our society here, of white and colored members, consists of one hundred. . . . Should piety, health, and trade attend this New-

bern, it will be a very capital place in half a century from this."

In 1802 the bishop makes another mention of Newbern, which shows its material and spiritual development. He conducted services for several nights, of which he says: "I concluded each meeting with prayer. We were crowded every night. I judged it needful to make some temporal and spiritual arrangements for the society in Newbern,—that a traveling preacher shall attend every Sabbath, is one. Newbern is a trading and growing town; there are seven hundred or a thousand houses already built, and the number is yearly increased by less or greater additions, among which are some respectable brick edifices; the new courthouse, truly so; neat and elegant; another famous house, said to be designed for the Masonic or theatrical gentlemen; it might make a most excellent church. The population of the town, citizens and transient persons, may amount to three thousand five hundred or four thousand souls."

On Sunday, he says, they took a public collection which amounted to sixty dollars, "and parted from our brethren, whom we left full of good resolutions to finish the house of God; the African Methodists also were about to build a place of worship. Truly we are encouraged; our own people are stirred up, and judges, counselors, doctors, and ministers attended our preaching, and appeared to be pleased; may they be profited and finally saved."

The bishop thought it worthy of remark that the lawyers and doctors attended. And when we consider that the Methodists had at first been as a despised and perse-

cuted sect, there is nothing that shows the development of Methodism more than this change in public sentiment. Bishop Asbury did not often go away from a place with such encouragement as he had received from his visit to Newbern. He now proposed to make Newbern a station. And it will be seen that he thought the same about Washington; that it ought to have preaching every week.

At Tarboro he found that "a neat new chapel" had been built, in which he preached from the text, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." He expresses hope that "Tarboro and Halifax will yet hear and receive the gospel." This was in 1802. When the bishop visited Tarboro in 1796 they had no house of worship, though he says there were two houses in town open to him. It was on this trip that he went to the courthouse and found a fire in one of the apartments, and thought it had been prepared for preaching; but when he saw a violin on the table, he learned that it had been heated up for a dance. However, they were kind enough to give way to the bishop, where he says "we had a serious congregation to hear."

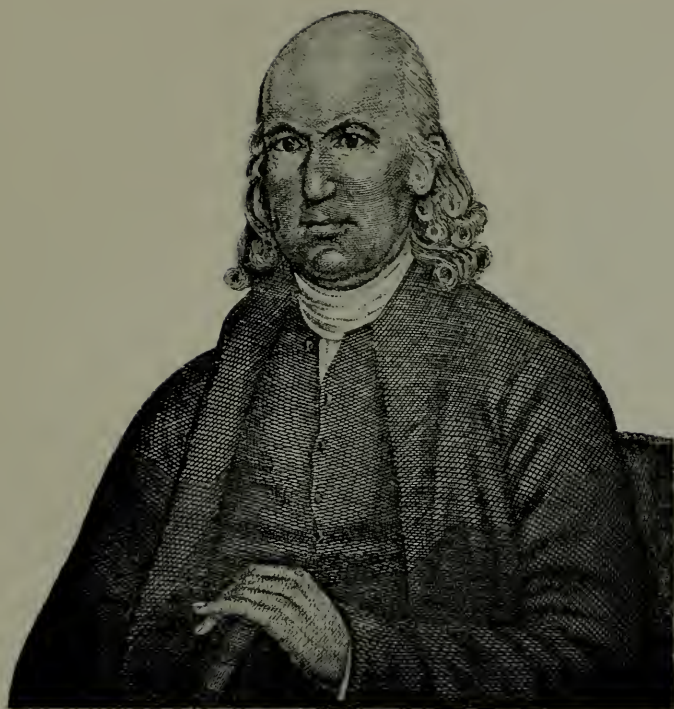
In 1797 John Sale is preacher in charge of the Bertie Circuit. His parents were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. When he was about twenty-one years old he was convicted of sin, and experienced religion. Soon he began to call sinners to repentance, and was received on trial as a traveling preacher in 1796, and sent to the Swannanoa Circuit. The next year he served the Bertie Circuit, and in 1798 Mattamuskeet. After this he went west, where he served the

Church until 1826 as circuit preacher, presiding elder, and in the superannuate relation. In all of these relations he was faithful.

These old pioneers died well. We find this account of Sale's last illness in the *Methodist Magazine* of 1828: "During his illness there was not an intervening cloud to darken his prospect of a better world; he observed to his colleague, 'If you think it worth while, tell my brethren that the religion I have recommended and preached to others now affords me consolation and support, in the view of death and eternity. Tell them my faith is unshaken in the doctrines of our Church.' He then clapped his hands and shouted triumphantly, in the prospect of a glorious immortality."

Christopher S. Mooring followed him on the Bertie Circuit in 1798. Dr. Bennett in his "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia" says, in speaking of Mr. Mooring, "Few have been more useful to the Church and more successful in all the work of the Christian ministry." He was born in Surry county, Virginia, in 1767; was admitted into the traveling ministry in 1789. He gave thirty-six years of service to the Church, and the minutes say, "He was made an instrument of great good to the souls of men." His last sickness was an exhibition of much patience and submission to the will of God. Through his useful life he was distinguished for his meekness and quietness of spirit. Many, led to Christ through his efforts, will go to make up his crown of rejoicing in the final day.

In 1779 Methodism suffered the loss of its leader in



CHRISTOPHER S. MOORING.

Newbern. William Early, a most valuable man, died after a few days of illness with yellow fever. He was a native of Virginia, and after laboring zealously as a local preacher for several years, he was admitted into the itinerancy in 1791. He traveled the Haw River Circuit one year. He was earnestly pushing forward his work at Newbern in 1799 when smitten by the terrible malady that ended his days on earth. Dr. Bennett, in speaking of him, says: "He was full of zeal, a powerful, earnest, and successful preacher. He was the honored instrument in the salvation of many souls." When he was seized with yellow fever he refused to take his bed, and mounting his horse, rode off to an appointment. He had gone but a few miles when, overcome by the fatal disease, he dismounted and threw himself under the shade of a tree by the roadside. Here he was found by a gentleman, who kindly conveyed him to his house. He lingered a few days in great pain, and ascended to the rest of the saints. In his last hours he had victory.

It may not be out of place to take a little retrospect of conditions in this section of the state at the close of the eighteenth century. In 1780 the Roanoke Circuit was the only charge in all this territory. That year it had a membership of four hundred and eighty. In 1790 this territory had four circuits—Camden, Bertie, Roanoke, and New River—with a membership of three thousand and seventy-two whites and one thousand two hundred and twenty colored. During this decade we see a most wonderful growth.

During the next ten years, from 1790 to 1800, the cir-

cuits were so divided that the number was doubled, giving the following circuits in 1800: Roanoke, Pamlico, Newbern, Goshen, Contentney, Camden, Bertie, and Banks and Mattamuskeet. But while the number of circuits had increased and the people were better served, yet from some cause the membership dropped from three thousand and seventy-two whites in 1790 to two thousand and seventy-three in 1800.

Of course some of this decrease was due to the secession of O'Kelly, as this section was affected more than any other part of the connection, except the southern part of Virginia, for Mr. O'Kelly was more popular in Virginia and eastern North Carolina than anywhere else. But the decrease was not all due to the O'Kellyan schism. There was much opposition to Methodism. The ground was contested at every point. The Methodist preacher found nothing but a cold, dead formalism in the Church, while sin and wickedness of every kind abounded on the outside. Many of those in the Church fought Arminianism, as taught by the Methodists, as they did a deadly foe. The Methodists were looked upon as a despised and persecuted sect. They had no church houses, no prestige, no history, nothing but that which was opposed to formalism and sin; and this was not popular. But these itinerants went forth amidst extreme hardships, privations, and sufferings, and planted Methodism in every nook and corner of eastern North Carolina before the year 1800; and we of to-day are still reaping the fruits of their labor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST SCHISM IN METHODISM.

James O'Kelly. Tar River Circuit. People Worldly-minded and Hard-hearted. O'Kelly's Fields of Labor—His Great Influence. The Council Established—First Council at Cokesbury. Bishop Paine's Comment on O'Kelly's Action. McKendree on Portsmouth Circuit—His Diary. General Conference Met in Baltimore—Attendance Large—O'Kelly's Resolution—Great Debate Followed—John Dickins Offers Amendment—O'Kelly with a Few Others Left Their Seats, and Retired—Visited by Committee—Dr. Coke Interviews O'Kelly—Thomas Ware's Account—O'Kelly Unfolds His Plan to McKendree. Rumors of a New Church—Letter of Richard L. Green. McKendree in Norfolk. In 1793 O'Kelly was Entered as Formally Withdrawn. New Church Organized—The Republican Methodists—Controversy Followed—Bitter Feelings Engendered—Estimated Loss. Principles of the Christian Church Stated—O'Kelly's Letter to Edward Cannon—Bishop Asbury Visits Him. The Hammett Schism. Great Revival Followed.

JAMES O'KELLY was one of the pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina; and it is to be regretted that he should require special notice under the head, "The First Schism in Methodism." He entered the itinerant ranks in 1777, and for fifteen years he rendered most efficient service in the Methodist connection. He laid the foundation of New Hope Circuit, and while on this circuit he had for his assistant Beverly Allen. They had a year of great success. Mr. Allen says, "Numbers joined our societies, and many professed faith in the Redeemer." In 1779, while O'Kelly was on this work, he extended his labors

down the Cape Fear section which was afterwards taken into the Bladen Circuit.

In 1780 he was on the Tar River Circuit. We gather from Asbury's Journal that the people were hard to move in a religious direction; that they were worldly-minded, and very indifferent to the preaching of the gospel. Asbury says, in speaking of O'Kelly: "This dear man rose at midnight and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, 'Give me children, or I die!' but I believe no preaching or preacher will do much good at present."

O'Kelly traveled Mecklenburg, Brunswick, and Sussex circuits. He was ordained an elder at the Christmas Conference in 1784. In order to see where he would exert his strongest influence, we will follow him for the next few years on his various fields of labor. The first district to which he was appointed embraced Amelia, Bedford, and Orange circuits. The next year, 1786, he traveled over Guilford, Halifax, and Mecklenburg circuits. In 1787 his district was much larger, embracing Bladen, New River, Tar River, Roanoke, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia; in 1788, Anson, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth, Brunswick, Amelia, Mecklenburg, Buckingham, Bedford, Amherst, Organe, Hanover, Williamsburg. For the next four years he traveled practically this same district. Rev. M. H. Moore, in his "Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," says: "Throughout this territory O'Kelly was highly esteemed and beloved. His labors were greatly blessed in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the hearts of the preachers and people were greatly

drawn to him. No other man wielded so powerful an influence over the people of this section; no man enjoyed more entirely the public confidence. Not a breath of suspicion had fallen upon his religious character in all his goings in and out before the people. He had conducted himself as a man of God and a Methodist preacher."

In 1789 a new ecclesiastical body was established, styled "The Council." Necessity was the mother of this singular body. The Church was rapidly spreading over a large territory, and the bishops saw the great inconvenience of summoning the preachers from all parts of the work to meet annually in one Conference. Hence they held small separate Conferences at different times and places; but this was not satisfactory, as it was impossible to pass any measure establishing a new enterprise until it had been agreed to, and adopted, by each Annual Conference. This arrangement required great unanimity to transact business, and for all the preachers to meet in one body would be very inconvenient.

It was to avoid these inconveniences and to promote unity that they now decided to have a Council consisting of not less than nine persons, of which the bishops and the presiding elders throughout the connection should be members. The Council was to represent the whole work, and it was to be invested with "authority to mature everything they shall judge expedient. First, to preserve the general union. Second, to render and preserve the external form of worship similar throughout the connection. Third, to preserve the essentials of Methodist

doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted. Fourth, to correct all abuses and disorders. And, lastly, to mature everything they may see necessary for the good of the Church, and for promoting and improving our colleges and plan of education."

In the absence of a General Conference, which perhaps had not been thought of at that time, this looks like a great improvement over the old method of procedure. But unfortunately some provisions were incorporated which killed it. Not only was unanimity required in the Council, but it was declared that "nothing so assented to by the Council shall be binding in any district until it has been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference held for that district." The utility of the whole arrangement seems to have been destroyed by these provisions. For if the District Conferences were to pass on every act, nothing was saved in time over the old system. Such *unanimity* could scarcely be expected among so large a number of independent bodies. The object was to maintain *Conference rights*, but at the expense of union and energy. After two years' trial it was abandoned by mutual consent.

The first session of the Council was held at Cokesbury on December 1st, 1789, consisting of Richard Ivey, R. Ellis, E. Morris, Philip Bruce, James O'Kelly, L. Green, Nelson Reid, J. Everitt, John Dickins, J. O. Cromwell, and Freeborn Garrettson. Bishop Asbury says, "All our business was done in harmony and love." The subjects of education, publishing, and relief of the suffering

preachers of the western frontiers were discussed and acted on at this meeting.

Bishop Robert Paine, in his "Life and Times of Bishop McKendree," makes this comment on James O'Kelly and his connection with the Council: "We have already seen that Mr. James O'Kelly was a member of this Council, was present at its session, and sanctioned its suggestions. But, unfortunately for his reputation, as well as for the peace of the Church, he had scarcely returned to his district before he changed his mind and began a course of systematic opposition. Whether this desertion of his colleagues, and, at first, covert war against the very measures he had sustained in the Council, resulted from a conviction of their impropriety, or of opposition to the Council itself, or (which is more probable still) from jealousy of Bishop Asbury's growing influence, coupled with an inordinate thirst for popularity, must be left to the decision of the reader. But certainly his subsequent conduct exhibits him in a very questionable light. If opposed to the *principle* involved in the organization of the Council, he had time and opportunities enough to form and express his convictions, without subjecting himself to the charge of gross inconsistency. If his objections were founded on the *acts* of the Council, he should have opposed them in the session of the Council, where one dissent would have defeated them. But we are constrained to the conclusion that other and less worthy motives dictated his factious course. He may not have been fully aware of the secret springs of his feelings and actions at the beginning of his defection, but charity itself, although it can 'cover

a multitude of sins,' can scarcely be so blind as not to perceive that his course is irreconcilable with candor and Christian integrity.'"¹

William McKendree, while on the Portsmouth Circuit in 1790, kept a diary in which he makes some entries that show what James O'Kelly, his presiding elder, was doing. "Monday, September 27.—Mr. O'Kelly, the presiding elder, came, and preached on John xvii. 7, 'Sanctify through thy truth; thy word is truth.' He opened the doctrine of sanctification to my great satisfaction. We had a melting time at the sacrament, *and then the poor miserable Council took up all our time until ten o'clock at night.*" Here, as elsewhere on his district, he was prejudicing the young men against the very measure for which he had voted. He was then preparing the dynamite with which he expected to rend the Conference, if not to bring about an explosion of the whole Church. Bishop Paine says, "Sanctification was his (O'Kelly's) theme in the pulpit, and detraction of Mr. Asbury his employment out of it." Bishop Asbury was for the Council, O'Kelly was against it.

On November the 4th McKendree makes this entry in his diary: "Met the preachers in Conference at brother Young's; twenty-two preachers present, and by *nine o'clock agreed to send no member to Council, but stand as we are until next Conference*; brother O'Kelly preached." This was a convention called by Mr. O'Kelly, inviting the preachers to meet in Mecklenburg, the object being to forestall the approaching Council.

¹"Life of McKendree," Vol. I., page 80.

As soon as Bishop Asbury entered the district of Mr. O'Kelly, he says: "I heard some painful circumstances relative to our disappointed brethren. I leave these things to God," etc. While the bishop was in the bounds of young McKendree's circuit, the latter makes this entry in his diary: "Bishop Asbury, two other preachers, and myself rode about sixteen miles. The wind was very keen, and the snow about eight inches deep; our poor horses were much fatigued, and ourselves pierced with the cold. We got to Mr. Blount's. *I am astonished at the bishop's sweet simplicity and uncommon familiarity.* Love appeared to sweeten all our conversation." Why astonished at the bishop's sweet simplicity, if not because his mind had been poisoned by representing the bishop as a despot?

Instead of the Council, O'Kelly favored a General Conference; and after securing the assistance of Dr. Coke, Asbury finally yielded for peace. The General Conference met in Baltimore on November 1st, 1792, which was the first meeting of the kind since the Christmas Conference of 1784, at which the Church was organized. The attendance was large, coming from all parts of the connection. They had met to review the condition of the Church, revise and adopt such rules and measures as might be found proper, and to settle certain questions which threatened the peace, if not the very existence, of the Church. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury "presided conjointly over their deliberations."

During the revision of the Discipline an amendment was introduced by James O'Kelly which aimed at the annihilation of the itinerant system, by the destruction of

the episcopal power in making the appointments. The amendment is as follows: "After the bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."

This resolution filled the Conference with strife and debate. At first the majority seemed to approve of the measure. The debate continued for three days, with the strongest minds of the Conference participating. As Bishop Asbury's administration was necessarily involved in the debate, he very wisely retired from the Conference. He wrote a short letter to the Conference, in which he says: "I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers." With this consciousness of doing right, he retired with great calmness while the storm raged within. No such debate had ever been witnessed in a Methodist Conference. The strongest men in Methodism were arrayed against each other. Many feared that the time-honored itinerant plan would be swept away. But John Dickins, one of the ablest men in the Conference, proposed a division of the subject, by which the question could be brought to a direct issue, thus: 1. "Shall the bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits?" 2. "Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?"

The motion to divide, after some discussion, was carried. Then the first question was put and carried unan-

imously. In considering the second question, this difficulty arose, as to whether this was to be regarded as a new rule. If so, it could only pass by a two-thirds vote. They finally, after a long debate, decided that it was an amendment. This brought the Conference back to the question as originally proposed. "On Monday," Jesse Lee says, "we began the debate afresh, and continued it through the day; and at night we went to Mr. Otterbein's church, and again continued it till near bedtime, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority."

The next morning Mr. O'Kelly with a few of his adherents sent a letter to the Conference, informing them that, as their resolution had been rejected, they could no longer retain their seats in that body. A committee was appointed to wait on Mr. O'Kelly and his party, and if possible persuade them to assume their seats in the Conference. Dr. Coke had a personal interview with Mr. O'Kelly, but he also failed to bring about a reconciliation. They were fixed in their purpose, which was more far-reaching and comprehended more than was conceived by the Conference.

In a few days Mr. O'Kelly and his partisans started on their return to Virginia, "taking their saddlebags, great-coats, and other bundles on their shoulders or arms, and walking on foot to the place where they had left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town." Jesse Lee says: "I stood and looked after them as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded

he would not be quiet long; but he would try to be head of some party."¹

Thomas Ware, who was present, gives the following account of his impressions: "Had Mr. O'Kelly's proposition been differently managed, it might possibly have been carried. For myself, at first I did not see anything very objectionable in it. But when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which the movers and others who spoke in favor of it indulged in the course of their remarks. Some of them said that it was a shame for a man to *accept* of such a lordship, much more to *claim* it; and that they who would submit to this absolute dominion must forfeit all claims to freedom, and ought to have their ears bored through with an awl, and to be fastened to their master's door and become slaves for life. One said to be denied such an appeal was an insult to his understanding, and a species of tyranny to which others might submit if they chose, but for his part he must be excused for saying he could not. The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. They urged that Mr. Wesley, the father of the Methodist family, had devised the plan, and deemed it essential for the preservation of the itinerancy. They said that, according to the showing of brother O'Kelly, Mr. Wesley, if he were alive, ought to blush; for he claimed the right to station the preachers to the day of his death. The appeal, it was argued, was rendered imprac-

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 180.

ticable on account of the many serious difficulties with which it was encumbered. Should one preacher appeal and the Conference say his appointment should be altered, the bishop must remove some other one to make him room; in which case the other might complain and appeal in his turn; and then again the first might appeal from the new appointment, or others whose appointments these successive alterations might interrupt. Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry.”¹

The withdrawal of Mr. O’Kelly and party from the Conference was not considered a secession, but it soon assumed that character. On their trip home they had many consultations, and on the latter part of the journey Mr. McKendree was the only companion of his old presiding elder, when Mr. O’Kelly unfolded his plan to him. It was to have “*a republican, no-slavery, glorious Church!*” Bishop Asbury was pope; the General Conference was a revolutionizing body; the bishop and his creatures were working the ruin of the Church to gratify their pride and ambition!”

When Bishop Asbury opened the Conference for the Virginia District at Manchester, on November the 26th, W. McKendree and R. Haggard sent him “their resignations in writing.” In the case of Mr. O’Kelly, it was resolved, in consideration of his age and services, to allow him his usual salary as when he traveled “provided he was peaceable and forbore to excite divisions among the

¹“Memoir of Rev. Thomas Ware,” page 222.

brethren." Mr. O'Kelly acceded to this proposition, and received his salary for a part of the year.¹

For some time it was hard for some of Mr. O'Kelly's friends to believe that he meant anything like a secession, or the establishment of a new Church. Richard L. Green, of Norfolk, Va., who was one of his ardent admirers. says: "I heard it rumored almost every day that he was paving the way to raise a Church to himself; but I was so wrapped up in him, I would not believe one word of it; I would not believe he would be guilty of such a crime." He says further: "We heard that he was to be in Suffolk (about twenty-six miles from Norfolk) in a few days. I went there and met him, and was with him two or three days at his appointments on his way to Portsmouth, and brought him with me to Norfolk. He preached in my house to so large a congregation that two of the sleepers of the house broke. After preaching he administered the sacrament to the society, at which time he let us know how much he had done for us, how much he loved us, and what a claim he had on us; but at the same time gave us to understand that if we did not go with him, he never should go with us. From that moment I was convinced of his wicked intention to divide the flock of Christ, and I was resolved to oppose him to the uttermost of my power; and I thank God he was never able to make a division in Norfolk, though he strove by all the means in his power to effect it."²

¹Sneathen's "Reply to O'Kelly's Apology," page 36.

²From a letter written by Richard L. Green and published in *The Itinerant* in its issue of August 5, 1829. *The Itinerant* was pub-

The name of William McKendree appears in the minutes of 1793, in charge of Norfolk and Portsmouth. He gives this account of his year's work: "Though it was a year of contention and much confusion, I enjoyed peace with the members of the station." He was greatly humbled and mortified at his course at the Conference at Manchester. His work was resumed after about a month of mental and religious struggle, having become a wiser man. At the Conference of 1793 the following were entered as formally withdrawn from the connection: James O'Kelly, Rice Haggard, John Allen, and John Robertson. O'Kelly and Haggard began at once to organize a new Church, pure and free from all the evils they fancied were in the Methodist Church. They were assisted by some disaffected local preachers. Allen soon settled and began the practice of medicine, giving up preaching altogether. Robertson continued as a local preacher for some years, when he became the head of a subordinate schism in the O'Kellyan ranks.¹

The leaders began to confer and hold meetings, in order to decide upon some plan of operation. They decided to give the new Church the title of "The Republican Methodists." At the time republican principles prevailed in Virginia, and of course something might be gained by a Church bearing this popular name. They renounced all rules of Church government, and took the New Testa-

lished in Baltimore and edited by Melville B. Cox. It was a small eight-page paper, which appeared twice a month. The editor says in his prospectus it is not published for aggression, but for defense.

¹"Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," page 327.

ment for their guide. In the ministry there were to be no grades; all were to stand on an equal footing. Mr. O'Kelly went to work with much zeal to establish his Church by personal work and by correspondence. Much of his writings were in bad taste, not to say in a bad spirit. The first of his writings that attracted much attention was written soon after his secession, a pamphlet entitled, "The Author's Apology for Protesting Against the Methodist Episcopal Government." In this in speaking of Bishop Asbury, he calls him Francis. Mr. Wesley he designates as John, etc. To this a reply was published by Mr. Snethen, which had a wonderful influence in arresting the schism.¹ The spirit of division prevailed chiefly in the southern counties of Virginia and North Carolina. In this region the influence of O'Kelly was greater than in any other part of the connection.

"And although his success in gaining proselytes from the ranks of Methodism was far less than he anticipated, yet the history of this painful schism is full of sad memorials; families were rent asunder; brother was opposed to brother; parents and children were arrayed against each other; warm friends became open enemies; the claims of

¹Rev. Nicholas Snethen, "A Reply to an Apology," etc., which called forth "A Vindication of an Apology," by James O'Kelly, which was met by "An Answer to James O'Kelly's Vindication of His Apology," by Mr. Snethen. In addition to these Mr. O'Kelly wrote much more: "The Prospect Before Us," Hillsboro, 1824; "Letters from Heaven Consulted," Hillsboro, 1822; "Divine Oracles Consulted," when published it is not known. In one of the pamphlets published by Mr. O'Kelly, Bishop Asbury is designated as the "Baltimore Bull," and the picture of a bull's head graces the title-page.

Christian love were forgotten in the hot disputes about Church government. The means of grace were neglected; piety declined; religion was wounded in the house of her friends, and the enemies of Christ exulted over many who had fallen away from the faith."¹ Jesse Lee says: "It was enough to make the saints of God weep between the porch and the altar, and that both day and night, to see how the Lord's flock was carried captive by that division."

O'Kelly was zealously pushing his cause and creating as much dissatisfaction as possible; and then the subject of religion was neglected and the people were talking Church government. Spirituality was waning, and it is very difficult to estimate the evil results of the division. Various estimates have been made as to the number of members lost to the Methodist Church. In O'Kelly's old district, where he wielded his greatest influence, one circuit from 1792 to 1795, when the excitement was at its highest, lost two hundred members; while there were two circuits in the very field of strife that had a net gain of four hundred. Hence the difficulty in tracing the loss to the schism; for after all their efforts up to 1794, the seceders had only about one thousand members. At any rate, the bad effect upon the Church was not in the loss of members, but in the bad spirit that was disseminated.

We insert the following from the "Principles and Government of the Christian Church," published at Suffolk, Va., in 1867: "Those who were instrumental in its estab-

¹"Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," Bennett, page 328.

lishment were Virginians and North Carolinians. The leading spirit in the organization was Rev. James O'Kelly, a distinguished minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, who labored earnestly and effectually in giving permanency and character to this Society, then in its infancy in this country. Mr. O'Kelly had hoped to find with the Methodists that spirit of liberality and reform that would ultimately permeate every Christian community and open the door of universal religious suffrage and harmonious union. But the arbitrary measures of a few individuals who at that time ruled the whole connection crushed his hopes in that direction, and he determined, though reluctantly, to withdraw and continue his work independent of them, which he did in the year 1792, followed by about twenty or thirty other ministers. After one or two preliminary meetings, Mr. O'Kelly and his associates met in General Conference the next year in Surry county, Va., and after mature deliberation adopted substantially the principles now maintained by the Christian Church, only they called themselves "Republican Methodists," which, however, they dropped the following year, and established the name Christian. Those who entered into this new organization in 1794 numbered about one thousand, and many more united with them the next year."

In a few years they had established churches in many portions of North Carolina and Virginia, having many devoted and God-fearing men and women worshiping at its altars. They began the publication of a periodical at Hillsboro in 1844. Subsequently it was removed to Pitts-

boro, where it was continued to be issued until the death of its editor, Elder Kerr. It was called *The Christian Sun*, and was published semi-monthly. It was later moved to Raleigh, and in 1852 it appeared as a well-printed weekly. It has since been removed to Elon College, where it is still published.

But while the Church had some growth, O'Kelly was no doubt sadly disappointed. He was ambitious, and when he saw all but one of the itinerants return and again rally around the standard of Methodism, he was greatly humiliated. He lived to see Bishop Asbury "descend to his grave in peace and full of honors, mourned by grateful thousands, as the father of American Methodism"; and his place filled by McKendree, whom he had expected to see a leader in his own works. If O'Kelly regretted his course, he never publicly expressed it. Peter Doub says he saw a letter written by O'Kelly to Rev. Edward Cannon, presiding elder on the Yadkin District, in which he expressed a regret as to the condition of his followers, and asked that Cannon take them "officially under his charge," saying "I am too old, and circumstances forbid me from doing so myself."¹ Just what O'Kelly meant by this is not exactly clear, but it leads us to the conclusion that he was not satisfied as to the final outcome of his efforts.

Bishop Asbury visited him in 1802, and makes this statement in his Journal: "We met in peace, asked of each

¹Peter Doub, in the *Enterprise*, May 14, 1866. Edward Cannon was appointed to the Yadkin District in 1814-17. It was during this time that the letter was written.

other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times—perhaps this is the last interview we shall have upon earth." O'Kelly settled in Orange county, North Carolina, and lived to the good old age of ninety-one years. There he built a church which still bears his name, and where his memory is still held in great veneration by all classes. After a long and stormy life, he died in peace on the 16th day of October, 1826.

About the same time of the O'Kellyan schism there was another division in the Church, though of less magnitude, which began in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1791. However, it affected Methodism in North Carolina very little. It was brought about by Mr. William Hammett, who was an Irishman by birth. He had been a Methodist preacher in the West Indies. He had not been in Charleston long before he endeavored to lay his plan for a separation, and to use his influence to divide the Methodist Society. He left the Methodists himself, and began to preach in the market house of the city. He never returned to preach among us as a Methodist preacher. In 1792 he drew off "a great part of the Society" in Charleston. Several local preachers joined him, but no traveling preacher. This is a remarkable fact, as is also the fact that only one went with O'Kelly. Mr. Hammett called his party the "Primitive Methodists." His purpose was to make the people believe that he was on the plan that the Methodists set out with at the beginning. He built a large church in the city, and one in the suburbs. His

followers also erected one at Georgetown, one in Savannah, and another in Wilmington, North Carolina. Here he collected a large congregation of colored people. Mr. Hammett wrote several pamphlets against the Methodists, some of which were replied to by Thomas Morrill and Dr. Coke. Hammett died on May 14, 1803, after a short illness. After his death the Society became greatly scattered. His church in Georgetown was turned over to the Methodists, and the one in Savannah was seldom used. The one in Wilmington was finally turned over to the Methodists.

But the final wind up of all these divisions was predicted by Bishop Asbury, where he said: "The General Conference and the District Conferences have kept us a long time from our work; but after all Satan's spite, I think our *sifting* and *shaking* will be for good: I expect a glorious revival will take place in America, and thousands be brought to God." This prophecy was fulfilled within the next decade, with one of the greatest revivals that the world has ever known since the day of Pentecost.

CHAPTER XII.

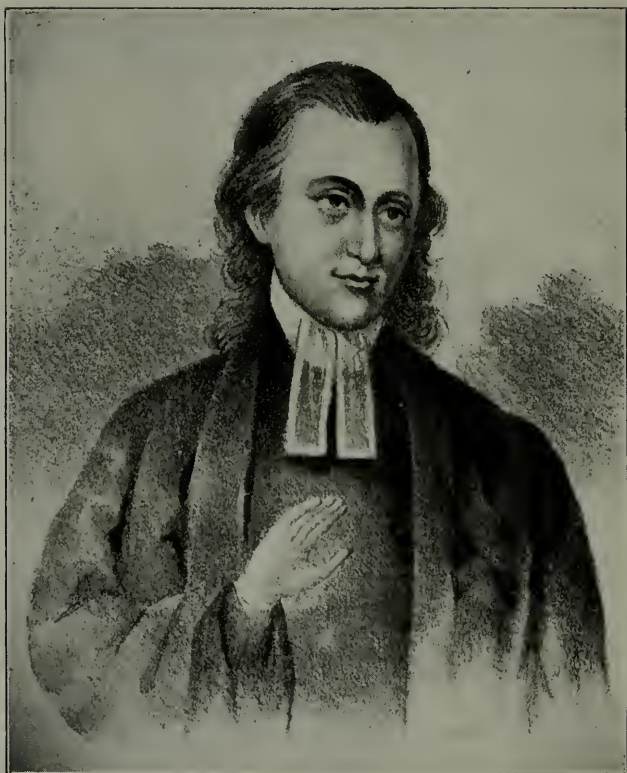
GROWTH IN THE CENTRAL PART OF NORTH CAROLINA, 1784 TO 1800.

Division of Circuits. Haw River Circuit Appears for the First Time in 1793. Henry Willis. Thomas Humphreys—Incidents. William Partridge. Thomas Bowen. Isaac Lowe. Early Life of William Burke. Quarterly Meeting at Hawfield. Thomas Ware on the Caswell Circuit—Blessed with a Great Revival—Appointed Presiding Elder. General Bryan Converted. Enoch George and Henry Hill on Caswell. Revival in Guilford. Bishop George Preaches in John Street Chapel. Coleman Carlisle. Mount Pleasant Church on Haw River Circuit. Thomas Mann. Daniel Hall. Samuel S. Steward. Expulsion of Simon Carlisle. Lewis Garrett. Bishop Asbury Again in North Carolina. Francis Poythress on a Large District. Size of Districts.

THREE circuits appear on the minutes for 1779—New Hope, Tar River, and Roanoke. In another chapter we followed the development of Methodism in the territory embraced by the "Old Roanoke Circuit," and found that in 1800 there were eight circuits in that section of the state, with a membership of white and colored of three thousand three hundred and eighty-four. Now, let us turn our attention to the growth of Methodism in the central part of the state.

In 1784, in what had been the two circuits, New Hope and Tar River, there were five circuits embraced in this territory—namely, Guilford, Caswell, Wilmington, New Hope, and Tar River—with a membership of one thousand one hundred and fifty-seven. There were very few changes in circuit boundaries in the next ten years. In





HENRY WILLIS.

1786 Wilmington disappeared from the list of appointments, and Bladen, embracing practically the same territory, was added in 1787. There was no further change until 1793, when Haw River appears among the appointments. This circuit was formed from the New Hope and Tar River circuits. Haw River only appeared on the minutes for one year (1793), and is not mentioned again until 1797. Franklin was formed in 1794. The consideration of Methodism in the Cape Fear section will be reserved for another chapter.

Perhaps no one man did more to develop Methodism on the old New Hope Circuit than Henry Willis. He was born in Brunswick county, Va., and entered the itinerancy in 1779. His bodily infirmities were great, being fragile in form and weak physically, yet he did a very arduous work. His portrait shows a countenance expressive of deep piety and sweet disposition, which were duly characteristic of him. He labored extensively from New York to Charleston, and wherever he went the cause of Christ was built up and his influence was as "ointment poured forth." After a lingering illness, he died with a strong confidence in God.

The Guilford Circuit was served in 1785 by John Smith and Stephen Johnson. Smith was received into the Conference in 1784 and disappeared in 1789, while Johnson had just been received, and this was his first year. He traveled one year in South Carolina, and during that year he doubled the membership on his circuit.

Thomas Humphreys and Isaac Smith were on the Tar River Circuit. They were both men of superior ability.

Mr. Humphreys was a native of Virginia, and was admitted on trial in 1783. His first appointment was Berkeley. The two following years he traveled respectively the Guilford and Tar River circuits. He assisted in forming the Little Pee Dee Circuit in 1789, and was presiding elder in 1797. "He was a man of fine personal appearance, preached with great earnestness and power, and was distinguished for his native wit and fearlessness. In the judgment of Mr. Travis, who often heard him, he was one of the greatest natural orators of his day, though by no means free from eccentricities."

Dr. Shipp, in his "History of Methodism in South Carolina," relates some incidents that show the style of his preaching. They also show the plainness of speech that was used by the early Methodist preachers in this country. While on the way to church one Sunday, a good sister said to him in a timid yet persuasive tone, "Now, brother Humphreys, recollect you are to preach to town folks; it will not do to be *too* plain." Mr. Humphreys made no response, but the good sister felt encouraged to hope for a discourse in full accordance with town culture. In preaching, however, with great earnestness on the duty of repentance, he said, with full emphasis, "If you don't repent, you'll all be damned." With the air of sudden recollection, and very great alarm, he jumped back in the pulpit and began to apologize: "I beg your pardon; you are town folks." This he repeated several times during the discourse, in each instance suiting the action to the word, and adding at the last, "If you are town folks, if you don't repent and become converted, God will cast you

into hell just as soon as he will a piney-woods sinner." The timid sister sat with her head bowed in great disappointment, fully resolved never to try to teach Mr. Humphreys any more pulpit æsthetics.

On one occasion he was preaching at a church where there had been some time before a great revival of religion. A dancing master had come into the neighborhood to make up a school, and some of the young converts had been persuaded to enter it. Mr. Humphreys in his sermon described in a graphic manner the wiles of the devil, traced out in minute detail his multifarious ways to ruin souls, all along developing lines of resemblance between Satan and a dancing master, until at length the latter could stand it no longer. He accordingly took up his hat and started toward the door: just as he approached it, Mr. Humphreys said, with loud and impressive voice, "But, brethren, resist the devil, and he will flee from you just like the dancing master." He no more made his appearance in the neighborhood. In addition to serving the Guilford and Tar River Circuits in North Carolina, Mr. Humphreys served Salisbury in 1787. He lived to a good old age, loved and esteemed by all who knew him.

Isaac Smith only remained on the Tar River Circuit a part of the year, having to fill a vacancy on an adjoining circuit, during the necessary absence of its preacher.¹ Henry Jones was this year on the New Hope Circuit. He was admitted in 1782, and served Pittsylvania, Fluvania,

¹Sprague's Annals, page 104.

New Hope, and Brunswick. After 1787 his name disappears from the minutes.

This section of the state was well served in 1786. Thomas Anderson and Micajah Tracy were on the Tar River Circuit, William Partridge on New Hope, John Baldwin on Guilford, and Sihon Smith on Caswell. Some of these gave long and efficient service to the Church. There is only one in this list that deserves special mention in this connection, and that is William Partridge. He was born in Virginia in 1754. At about twenty years of age he embraced religion. He entered the traveling connection in 1780, and traveled nineteen years. Then he spent twenty-five years of his life as a local preacher; reëntered the itinerancy, and while on the Sparta charge, Georgia, he died in 1817. As a preacher he was "experimental, practical, and plain, and none were at a loss to understand him." Micajah Tracy joined the Conference in 1786, and located in 1791.

In 1787 Tar River and New Hope were served by two men, if we may judge by the appointments they filled, who became leaders in the Church. They both served some of the strongest charges, and they both in after years became Book Stewards. The men referred to are John Baldwin and Thomas Bowen. The latter, after serving a number of circuits, Roanoke and Tar River among them, was made presiding elder. He filled this important and delicate office—and especially was it important and delicate at that particular period—1790 to 1795. This may seem a short term to remain in that coveted office, but it was quite a long one at that time. At the Conference in

1795 he was appointed Book Steward. His name then disappears from the minutes.

Isaac Lowe had a great deal to do in developing Methodism in this part of the state. He spent the most of his itinerant life in the central part of the state as circuit preacher and presiding elder. He was admitted into the Conference in 1787, and after spending one year on Orange Circuit he was appointed to Caswell in 1789. In 1790 he was on the New Hope. It was during this year that William Burke was awakened under his ministry; and if he had done nothing more than this, he would have started an influence for good that can only be measured in eternity. William Burke had come from Virginia in 1787 with his father and settled in Guilford county, not far from Guilford Courthouse. He soon removed to High Ford on Haw River. Here he entered into all the amusements of the day, and became very worldly and sinful; but after hearing Lowe preach, he never rested until he had obtained experimental religion. It was the custom then to call on the young converts to talk and pray in public. He says, "I took up my cross and continued to pray at every meeting." They saw his ability, and soon put him forward to conduct the meetings. He says: "The heavenly flame spread through the neighborhood, and the neighboring classes caught the holy fire, and in a short time hundreds attended our night meeting, and spent the whole night, while the mourners were down in the house and all over the yard, crying mightily to God for mercy. That year George McKinney, a son of thunder, was sent

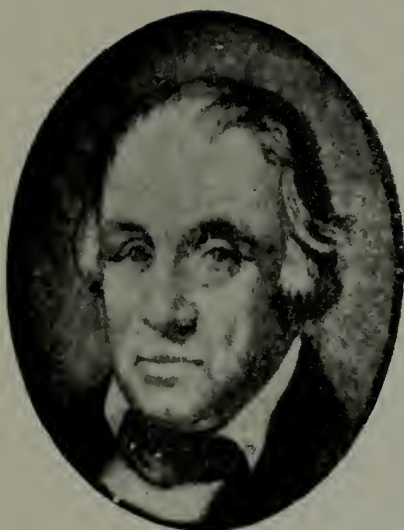
to Guilford Circuit, who entered fully into the work, and great numbers were added to the Church.”¹

Mr. Burke continued to exercise his gifts in this way until the month of August, when he attended a quarterly meeting at the Hawfield, on the New Hope Circuit. There was a great congregation present on Sunday. Thomas Ware was the presiding elder, but Thomas Bowen was at the quarterly meeting on a tour south, and preached the first sermon on Sunday. A great revival followed, and “many in that quarter had never seen the like before.”

Isaac Lowe was then on the New Hope Circuit, and insisted that young Burke should accompany him round the circuit, and it required six weeks to make the tour. He did so, “preaching time about” until Lowe was taken sick and returned home, leaving Burke to complete the round. When Burke returned home, he found that one of the preachers had left Guilford Circuit and gone home, and he was requested to take his place, which he did with great acceptability.

He attended the Annual Conference at McKnight’s, and there appearing to be no vacancy, he returned home; “but,” he says, “my mind was not at rest.” He continued to preach as a local preacher, preaching three, four, and five times a week, and riding forty and fifty miles. The next Conference was held at Green Hill’s, where he was admitted on trial and sent to the West New River Circuit on the head waters of the Kanawha River, in the state of

¹Autobiography of William Burke, in “Western Methodism,” page 26.



WILLIAM BURKE.

Virginia. He continued to travel in this western country until 1797, when he was appointed to the Guilford Circuit. While on this circuit he made his home with his father, near the High Rock ford on Haw River, Rockingham county. For some reason, here in this beautiful and usually plentiful Piedmont section he found great distress, and many perished for want of breadstuffs.

During the year he attended the General Conference which assembled in Baltimore. Throughout Mr. Burke's long career he labored successfully in North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Ohio. He filled every appointment with ability equal to that which the occasion required. He did not lack in executive ability. His preaching was, from what we can learn, of a high order, with the voice of thunder. He was a strong man in debate, and engaged in a public debate on two occasions.

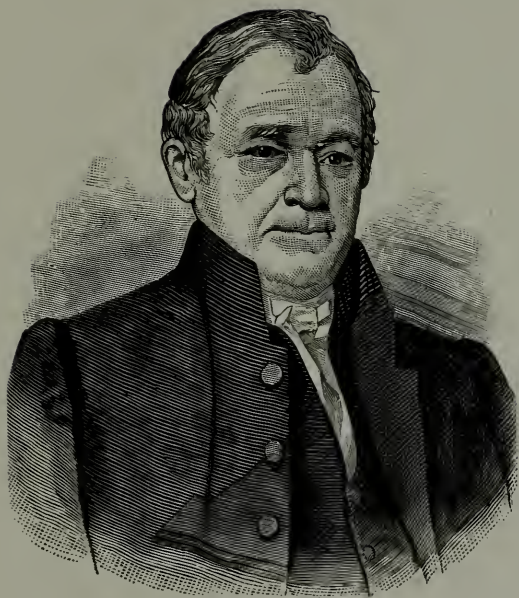
Isaac Lowe was appointed presiding elder in 1791 over the following charges: Caswell, Guilford, Yadkin, Lincoln, Anson, and Salisbury. In 1772-4 he was returned to the same district. He located in 1795. George McKinney, who was referred to by William Burke as a "son of thunder," and who served the Guilford Circuit in 1770, was admitted that year, and located in 1794.

At the Conference at McKnight's in 1789, Thomas Ware was appointed to the Caswell Circuit; and he says, "At the close of the Conference, I set out for my field of labor, poorly clad and nearly penniless, but happy in God." The year before he had traveled in Holston, and he continues by saying: "In the Holston country there was but little money, and clothing was very dear. My coat was

worn through at the elbows; and I had not a whole undergarment left; and as for boots, I had none. But my health was good, and I was finely mounted. I could have sold my horse for sufficient to purchase another to answer my purpose, and clothe myself decently; but he had borne me safely through so many dangers, and once, at least, by his instinctive sagacity, rescued me from perishing, that I had resolved that nothing but death should separate us. This, however, soon occurred; for in a few days this noble animal, my sole property in the world at that time, sickened and died; so there I was an entire stranger, several hundred miles from home, without horse, decent clothing, or funds. But not without friends. The good brother with whom I stayed gave me a horse for four weeks on trial; and I determined to go to Newbern, and try my credit for clothing."¹

While the Methodist preachers were often persecuted at that day, yet they were never long without friends in North Carolina. Especially was this true with men like Thomas Ware, a man with much natural ability highly cultured for his day and time. His horse was all his capital, his companion through long and lonely hours of travel over mountains and through dense forests. Yet among strangers, without money, without clothes, and in the midst of his misfortune, he found friends and was happy in God. The history of the world does not show another class of men like the early itinerants of Methodism in this country.

¹"Memoir of Thomas Ware," 1839, page 161.



THOMAS WARE.

On his way to Newbern, Thomas Ware called at the house of a gentleman by the name of Howe, who though not a Methodist was friendly to them. They talked of the western country, in which Mr. Howe seemed deeply interested. He learned of Mr. Ware's destitute condition, and was deeply affected; and of his business to Newbern to purchase clothing, where he knew no one. On his departure, Mr. Howe handed him a letter to deliver to his clerk at his store in Newbern. Little did Mr. Ware think at the time that the letter contained directions for the clerk to let him have goods to the amount of twenty-five dollars. "Thus did the Lord provide," says Thomas Ware.

He returned to his circuit (Caswell), and soon afterwards visited a pleasant settlement consisting almost exclusively of Episcopalians, who had long been without a minister. They requested him to preach for them, and baptize their children, which he did and found them ripe for the gospel. Many children were brought and dedicated to God in baptism. He addressed the parents, who became deeply affected. He went to spend the night in the neighborhood, and though no appointment had been made, the house was filled with people. He preached, and the mother of the family where he was stopping began to cry for mercy. Great commotion followed. He continued to pray and exhort until midnight. The meeting continued with increasing interest, and in "six weeks," Ware says, "we had a society in this place of eighty members, mostly heads of families."¹ This great work of grace began with the baptizing of infant children.

¹"Life of Ware," page 164.

In 1790 he was appointed presiding elder on a district consisting of the following charges: New Hope, Bladen, Tar River, East New River, Contentney, Halifax, Mecklenburg, and Cumberland. This district embraced a territory from Burlington to Cape Hatteras, and from below Wilmington to some distance into Virginia. During the year there was a great revival at one point on New River. In one family there were thirty who professed religion, twelve whites and eighteen colored. This was in the family of a distinguished lawyer and a professed deist, General Bryan.¹ His wife at a favorable moment had obtained a promise from the General to attend her to the quarterly meeting. When the day arrived, the coach and servants were in readiness to convey Mrs. Bryan, but the General refused to go. This was a great disappointment to her, and she said she would not go without him. After hesitating for a moment, she ordered the carriage put up, and then, with a forced smile, said: "I must forgive you, General, this ungentlemanly act, as it is the first I have had to complain of. If you, sir, can lightly get over your pledge, I cannot get over mine. I have said I would not go without you." She added, "If my husband was a Christian, I should be one of the happiest of women." She burst into tears, and the General said, "I cannot resist the eloquence of tears; dry them up, and I will go."

¹The facts in reference to General Bryan are from the "Memoir of Thomas Ware." The General's initials are not given, but from all the light we can obtain we feel very confident that it was General William Bryan, of Craven county, who was appointed in 1776 Brigadier General of the Newbern District. He was a member of the Assembly at Hillsboro in 1775, and at Halifax in 1776.

Thomas Ware, in giving an account of this incident, says: "On Sunday morning the General and his lady were seated again in the congregation. Preaching, with short intervals, continued for several hours, and the whole assembly were, from time to time, bowed down like the slender reed before the passing breeze; but none of them as yet lost their elasticity. Many hearts became bruised, but none broken. The last that spoke melted his suitors on these affecting words, namely, '*Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*' Under this discourse General Bryan was seen to weep";¹ and many were surprised when he arose and asked permission to speak. And in addressing them, he made a confession of his belief in God, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, as his only Saviour. The congregation was deeply moved, and the meeting continued until sundown, while many others returned to the Lord.

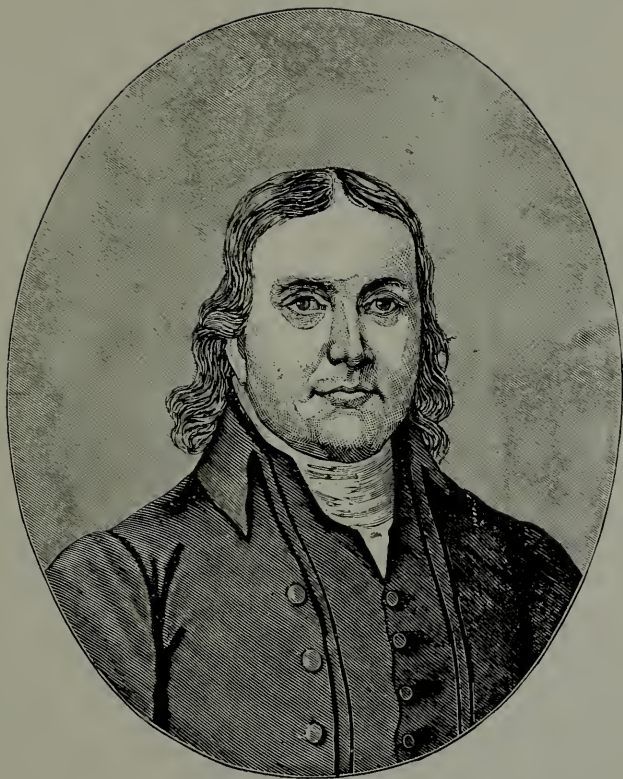
Just before leaving North Carolina, Thomas Ware had a very unusual offer made him. It will be remembered that he came here a stranger, with no money and not decently clad, but he found friends. And now, as he is about to leave, an aged couple having no children but good property offered him all of their estate if he would remain with them. He says, "This presented a strong inducement to exchange a life of poverty and toil for one of affluence and ease." But it was refused, that he might continue in the itinerancy.

¹"Life of Ware," page 166.

Thomas Ware was a man of learning as well as being an all-round man. He was born in New Jersey, December 19, 1758. At the age of twenty-three he was converted under the ministry of Caleb Pedicord. His name appears on the minutes for the first time in 1784. He traveled two years in Holston, two in North Carolina, and his next appointment was Wilmington, Delaware. His ministerial career extended over a period of more than fifty-seven years, and he was for some time before his death the oldest Methodist preacher in the country. He was elected in 1812 one of the Editors and Book Stewards, where he served for four years. He died in Salem, N. J., March 11, 1842. Thus passed away one of the most cultured and heroic men of early Methodism.

In 1791 another was sent to the Caswell Circuit who afterwards rose to great distinction in his Church. The preacher referred to is Enoch George, who was elected and ordained a bishop in 1816. His colleague on the Caswell Circuit was that great and good man, Henry Hill, said by Mr. Asbury "to have been the evening star of that period in Methodism." He had been educated for a lawyer, but when God laid his hand upon him, and sent him out to call sinners to repentance, he went "as a star in God's right hand." Enoch George says they completed their labors "on the circuit with pleasure and success."¹ During the year a strong and lasting friendship was started between these ministers of the gospel that grew stronger as the years went by.

¹*Methodist Magazine*, Vol. XII., page 134.



ENOCH GEORGE.

The next year, 1792, Enoch George is on the Guilford Circuit, where, he says, "it pleased the Head of the Church to revive his work gloriously." Here Mr. George found more "noise and extravagance of various kinds" than he had ever seen before, and much of it he failed to endorse. This year the General Conference met, in which the O'Kellyan schism arose. Isaac Lowe, the presiding elder, being afflicted and unable to go, sent George in his stead, which was quite complimentary to one of his years.

But Enoch George was destined to reap greater honors still, for he continued to grow in popularity as a preacher and as a man of superior ability, until in 1816 he was elected to the highest office in the gift of the Church. This place he filled with great ability, being always equal to every occasion. Rev. Samuel Luckey described a scene in Old John Street Chapel in New York which occurred about a month after Enoch George was made bishop. When the speaker appeared and it was whispered from seat to seat, "It is Bishop George," a disappointed expression was depicted on many faces. As he read his hymn, every one seemed startled. They could hardly believe that such a voice could come from a man so ordinary in appearance. He looked like a weather-beaten soldier. "His hair, which was thick and bushy, was parted in the center and thrown loosely back upon his back and shoulders. His dress was not only plain, but slovenly—not at all in keeping with the place which he occupied." So when this rough-looking man began to enunciate his hymn in that clear, penetrating voice, no wonder they were startled. But in the midst of his sermon, "like a mighty

cataract, he rushed on with constantly increasing impetuosity, till every nerve that had braced itself to resist was unstrung, and his hearers seemed passively to resign themselves to an influence which was too strong for them."¹

Bishop George was a man unassuming and diffident almost to a fault. He had fine conversational powers in the midst of his intimate friends, but studiously avoided the company of strangers. He was a man of great humility, piety, and usefulness. His death was one of victory, and his last words were full of intense rapture.

Coleman Carlisle traveled the Tar River Circuit in 1793. Up to this time the territory about Raleigh had been embraced in the Tar River Circuit, but this year the Haw River Circuit was formed, and all that territory was embraced in it. The arrangement only continued one year, and Haw River does not appear again on the minutes until 1797. From that time, the Haw River Circuit extended east to Edward Morris's, which was about a half mile from Huntsville on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad.²

Coleman Carlisle joined the Conference in 1792, and at the close of 1803 located. He reëntered in 1819 and served until 1823, when he located from absolute necessity. "I have known him," says Mr. Travis, "after returning home from several miles distant, after supper to take the same horse (having but one) and plow him by moonlight until near midnight, and then go off next morning to his appointments." He was a very popular

¹Sprague's Annals, page 193.

²"Centennial of Methodism," 1876, page 88.





ROCKY RIVER CHURCH.

This building is in Chatham County four miles southeast of Liberty, and was erected under the direction of Bishop Asbury, about 1791.

preacher, and was sent for far and near to preach funeral sermons, for which he received no compensation. But he is now reaping his reward. Of course up to this time there were very few houses of worship that deserved the name of a church, according to our idea of a church building, yet God owned and blessed his word, and souls were converted and made happy in his love; and what need we care for the style of house? They were all built very much alike, and to describe one is to give some idea of them all. Mr. E. W. Atwater, in the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* for November 4, 1888, vividly described the old Mount Pleasant church on the Haw River Circuit, now a very strong country church. He says there was a society there as early as 1790. "Soon after this a church was built upon this lot, of unhewed logs, covered with boards which were held in place with poles and rocks instead of nails, with no floor except that nature provided, and split logs laid upon other logs large enough to raise them sufficiently were the pews with which this first church was furnished. It was in this rude house that the Methodists began the work of Christianizing this community, which was desperately wicked."

In 1794 Thomas Mann was appointed to the Tar River Circuit, having just been admitted into the Conference. He was born in Virginia, April 1st, 1769. He traveled in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. Here is a partial list of the appointments he filled: 1794, Tar River; 1796, Union; 1797, Pamlico; 1798, Swannanoa; 1799, French Broad; 1800, Amelia; 1801, Cumberland; 1802, Sussex; 1803, Newbern; 1804, Bertie. He continued in

the itinerant ranks till called to his reward, on June 22, 1830, having labored five years in the ministry. "As a minister of the Gospel, his doctrine, plain and practical in preaching, and generally useful and acceptable where he labored."¹

Thomas Mann was followed on Tar River by Daniel Hall, who was far above the ordinary. He entered the ministry at an early age, and soon rose to take a stand among the first class. "He possessed a sound judgment, was an excellent disciplinarian, and as a presiding elder had no superior in the Church." He did not often address the Conference, but when he did, his words were listened to with profound attention. For fifty years he filled his place as an itinerant Methodist preacher, and did it with honor and usefulness to the Church.

In 1794 Bishop Asbury passed across Stokes county to the head waters of Dan River, where he found Philip Sands, who served the Tar River in 1792. The bishop, in speaking of him, says: "I met with Philip Sands from old Lynn, a child of Providence; after passing solemn scenes at sea, he was taken off and left in the lowlands of North Carolina. First a Christian, then a preacher. He was stationed in Guilford, but offered himself a volunteer for Swannanoa; which station has been vacant nearly six months, one of the preachers there being sick and the other married."

Samuel S. Steward was on the Caswell Circuit in 1795, Lawrence Mansfield was on the New Hope, and Daniel

¹"Holston Methodism," Dr. R. N. Price, page 322.

Dean and William Wilkerson were on the Guilford. For thirteen years Mr. Steward gave faithful and efficient service on the following charges: 1792, Orange; 1793, Franklin; 1794, Portsmouth; 1795, Caswell; 1796, Tar River; 1797, Newbern; 1798, Guilford; 1799, Orange; 1800, Bottetourt; 1801, Amelia; 1802, Mecklenburg; 1803, Sussex; and located in 1804. Daniel Dean entered the itinerancy in 1790 and located in 1796.

William Burke was on the Guilford Circuit in 1797, and he mentions several important events which took place on the circuit that year. Among others, he mentions the fact of receiving Simon Carlisle back into the Church. Carlisle had been a traveling preacher in the Conference, but was expelled in 1794. He was admitted in 1790, and appointed to the Caswell Circuit; 1791, Lincoln; 1792, Salisbury; 1793, Trent; and was dismissed in 1794. Carlisle was a very talented young man, and was very acceptable and useful wherever he went. He had just completed his year's work on the Caswell Circuit. "In those days it was the custom for the preacher to select some place in the circuit which he considered his home, where he deposited for safe keeping his surplus books and clothes, etc. He had made his home at brother Harrison's, not far from Dan River; and on the morning he was about to leave the circuit for the Annual Conference, he packed up his things in his saddlebags and left them in his room unlocked and went out to see something about his horse. In his absence a wicked young man, son of brother Harrison, put a pocket pistol into his saddlebags. On his return to the room, without making any examination, he

locked his saddlebags and left for Conference. When he arrived at his mother's, on the way to Conference, on taking his things out of his saddlebags he found a pocket pistol. He could not account for it being there; but leaving it, he proceeded on to Conference. During the year the pistol was taken to a shop on the road to have some repairs done to it, and a person passing challenged the same as being the pistol of young Harrison, and the same was traced to brother Carlisle. At the next Annual Conference he was charged with the fact of taking the pistol, and excommunicated from the Church. During the summer of 1796 young Harrison was taken sick and died; but just before his death he made a full confession of his having put the pistol into the saddlebags of brother Carlisle, with the intention of injuring him."¹ Mr. Burke says he had the pleasure of restoring brother Carlisle to the bosom of the Church, to his great joy. He remained a minister in good standing in the Church, living for many years in Middle Tennessee, and finally connected himself with the Tennessee Conference as a traveling preacher.

Lewis Garrett traveled the Haw River Circuit in 1797, and Caswell in 1798. These are the only years of his long and useful life that were spent in North Carolina. He was born April 24, 1772, and in 1794 he was admitted into the traveling connection. He traveled extensively through Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and traveled the two years mentioned above in North Carolina. He lo-

¹Autobiography of William Burke.

cated in 1805, and in his writings he leaves this explanation why he located: "Twelve years' incessant travel and labor, upon an extensive scale, had considerably enfeebled a once robust constitution."¹ Though he was located, he was not idle. He was still abundant in the work of the ministry. In 1816 he reëntered the traveling connection, and after remaining active until 1837 he again located; but in 1848 he appears as a superannuated preacher in the Mississippi Conference, which relation he sustained until his death on April 28, 1857, in the full assurance of faith, aged eighty-five years and four days. His last days were spent as a missionary among the colored people.

In October, 1799, Bishop Asbury made another visit to North Carolina. Coming into the state from Virginia, he crossed Dan River at Perkins Ferry, and went to John Harris's in Rockingham county. On Tuesday, 1st of October, he was at Smith's meetinghouse, which was on the Guilford Circuit, where he preached on Hebrews iii. 12, 13. He says: "We dined at Martin's, and then came on to father Low's; we have ridden but eight miles this day. At Low's meetinghouse a large congregation attended: I spoke upon Isaiah xi. 1. The heat was very painful. I suppose we congregate from three to six thousand souls weekly; thus, if no more, I can say that my traveling hath brought thousands to hear the gospel who, probably, would not otherwise have heard it." They then went to Covey's in Guilford county. Then down on South Fork of Haw River. They attended a quarterly meeting on

¹"Methodism in Tennessee," page 181.

Saturday and Sunday at Bethel on Belew's Creek, where the bishop ordained five deacons, and had a "gracious time."

They rode through Stokes county, and attended meeting at Love's Church. Here the bishop found something that was so unusual that he makes special mention of it. In speaking of Love's Church, he says "it has glass windows and a yard fenced in." Of course at that day it was remarkable for a church to have glass windows. Jesse Lee, who was with the bishop, preached here. The next stop was at William Jean's, near the "Moravian Old Town." "We held meeting," says the bishop, "and had a multitude of Germans present." They then pass through Salem, and on to McKnight's and across the Yadkin, into what is now Davie county, and preached at Whitaker's Church, near Brown's old mill, on Dutchman Creek. Nothing of this old church remains but the foundation stones. They visited Beal's Chapel, which was a few miles north of the present village of Calahan in Davie county. Here Jesse Lee preached on "The word of the Lord as *a fire and a hammer*"; and the bishop on "Take heed how ye hear." This was a great day for Methodism in that section. They made their way through Iredell, Wilkes, Burke, and Lincoln, into South Carolina.

In 1800 Francis Poythress, who was one of the first circuit preachers in North Carolina, was appointed presiding elder on a district embracing the following charges, extending from Asheville to Cape Hatteras, and from Wilmington to the Virginia line: Morganton and Swannanoa, Yadkin, Salisbury, Haw River, Guilford, Frank-

lin, Caswell, Tar River, Newbern, Goshen, Wilmington, Contentney, Pamlico, Roanoke, and Mattamuskeet and Banks. For several years the districts have been growing larger. On this district there was a membership of 4,429 whites and 1,253 colored.

While the presiding elder was traversing these large districts, Bishop Asbury was making a visit almost annually from Maine to Georgia. In 1798 the bishop passed through this section, coming by Edward Taylor's in Granville, at Banks Church, meetinghouse on Hickory Mountain, Pleasant Garden, where he lodged with Daniel Sherwood; thence to Bell's on Deep River, and to Wood's on Uwharrie, in the lower part of Randolph, and down Pee Dee River into South Carolina. He was continually going, superintending the work, preaching and holding Conferences. The Church was growing, but men were giving their lives upon its altars.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPE FEAR SECTION, 1784 TO 1800.

Organization Near Wilmington. Beverly Allen—The First Methodist Preacher in this Section. Infidelity Around Wilmington. More Progress up the River. Moore County Occupied. Bladen Circuit Formed by Daniel Combs. Jonathan Bird. Increase in Membership. John Ahair. Extent of Bladen Circuit. Samuel Edney—Bishop Asbury Visits Edney. Bladen Circuit Embraced Six Counties. Lumberton. James Jenkins. Persecutions and Foes in Wilmington. Methodism in Wilmington. Bennett Kendrick. Growth from 1784 to 1800.

BEFORE the close of the Revolutionary War, Philip Bruce and James O'Kelly organized a small society somewhere near Wilmington on the Cape Fear. But it was soon broken up, and nothing remained except three good women. In 1784 the cultured and polished Beverly Allen, with James Hinton, was sent to form the Wilmington Circuit. A gentleman living in Duplin county in 1810 gave the following interesting account of the origin and growth of Methodism in his county: "The first Methodist preacher who visited this county was the noted Beverly Allen, who came immediately after the Revolutionary War (1784). He was followed by sundry other itinerant and circuit Methodist preachers. They were at first successful. They formed several societies and classes in the county. These, however, were not all permanent. Many who had joined and professed themselves members of the Methodist Church began to think the rules and discipline of it too strict to be

by them constantly adhered to. Many fell off and resumed their former practices, and some joined other Churches."

At this date there was much infidelity around Wilmington; the Established Church of England had all the prestige; and when these two facts are taken into consideration, it will be seen that it was unfavorable ground for a religion that is spiritual and vital. So Methodism at the beginning did not find a very fertile field in this section; and for this reason the Wilmington Circuit was discontinued in 1786, and the Bladen Circuit was substituted for it in 1787.

John Baldwin followed Mr. Allen in 1785. He was a man of ability, and lived to fill some of the most prominent places in the Church. But with the efforts of such gifted men as Allen and Baldwin the work did not prosper in the lower Cape Fear. It was quite different further up the river. The preachers at an early date came down from the New Hope Circuit and planted Methodism, and soon there was some apprehension that it would become the dominant religion in a section of country strongly preoccupied by the Presbyterians and Baptists. A writer giving an account of the progress of the Churches in Moore county in 1810 says: "There are at present but three regular Presbyterian congregations in Moore county. The number of communicants is about two hundred. The Baptists have a number of societies and churches, but are likely to be soon outnumbered by the Methodists, whose popular doctrines, plans, zeal, and diligence are better calculated than any other profession to

make proselytes of the common people. Within the orbit of their circuits are a number of places for stated preaching in the county. We have also a few Quakers—orderly, industrious, and worthy members of the community.” Soon after this prediction this whole section was a network of appointments embraced in well-arranged circuits.

In 1787 Bladen Circuit was formed by Daniel Combs, who had just entered the itinerancy. After spending one additional year, 1788, in Pennsylvania, and another, 1789, in New Jersey, he retired from the itinerant ministry. He was followed by another young man, Thomas Hardy, who only spent one year on Bladen (1788) and one on Orange, after which he located.

Jonathan Bird, who was on Bladen in 1790, was in point of ability above the ordinary. He was born in Wilkes county, North Carolina, on January 22, 1764. His father, Benjamin Bird, afterwards removed near Old Fort, where he settled. Jonathan Bird was admitted on trial into the itinerancy in 1789, and appointed to Roanoke; in 1790, to Bladen; 1791, to Guilford; 1792, to Caswell; 1793, to Anson; 1794, to Tar River; 1795, to Contentney; and after spending two years in Holston, one as a presiding elder, he located, and settled in McDowell county near his father. He labored very acceptably as a local preacher in that section of the state until 1836, when his health had become so impaired that he could no longer render service in the pulpit. He died on July 12th, 1848, at the ripe old age of eighty-four.¹

¹Rev. John W. Bird, late of the Western North Carolina Conference, is the grandson of Jonathan Bird.

In June, 1791, John Ahair and William Bellamy were on the Bladen Circuit. From the increase in membership, it is judged that they did a good work. In 1791 the minutes show a membership of 287, and in 1792 the number reported is 467, showing a net gain of 180. John Ahair was a native of North Carolina. He was admitted into the traveling ministry in 1791, and died in November, 1794. The minutes thus speak of him: "A meek-spirited, holy, zealous man. Weak in body, strong in faith and love, three years wholly given up to the work. He departed this life November, 1794;—sweetly slept in Jesus after a short and happy life, aged about twenty-six years."

The Bladen Circuit now embraces in its regular appointments the entire country from Long Bay in South Carolina to the Cape Fear, including Conwayboro, Lumberton, Elizabeth, Smithville, Old Brunswick Courthouse, and Wilmington. Not only were the numbers increasing from year to year, but, unlike many other places, families of respectability and influence were joining the Methodist Church.

Samuel Edney served the Bladen Circuit in 1792. He was born in Pasquotank county in 1768; was led to Christ by the preaching of the early Methodists in that county, and was licensed to preach in 1790. He served the following charges: 1791, New Hope; 1792, Bladen; 1793, Swannanoa; 1795, Yadkin. When Mr. Edney was going from Bladen to the Swannanoa Circuit in 1793, there was an appointment made for him with this announcement: "Rev. Samuel Edney, an eminent Methodist minister from the north, will preach here," etc. A

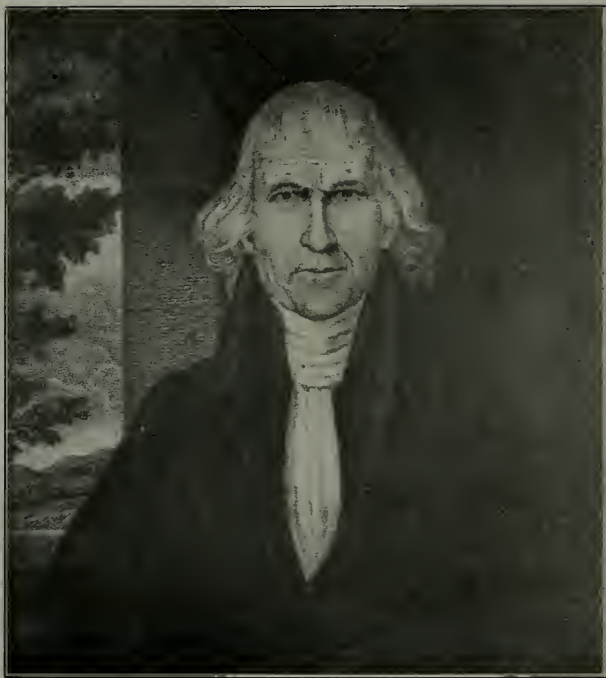
large audience gathered. With great embarrassment he tried to preach while trembling from head to foot. But with all this the sermon made a most powerful and lasting impression for good. He settled in Henderson county at a place that was named for him, Edneyville. He had regular Sunday appointments for preaching as long as he lived. While he was a local preacher, he was at one time postmaster, and was a justice of the peace for forty years. He was thus honored and respected by those who knew him. It is said that in old age he would often make the remark, "I have served God over fifty years, and have never seen the moment when I regretted it." He died September 17th, 1844.¹

Bishop Asbury made a visit to Samuel Edney's in 1806, and made the following note: "I preached at Samuel Edney's. Next day we had to cope with Little and Great Hunger Mountain. Now, I know what Mills Gap is between Buncombe and Rutherford; one of the descents is like the roof of a house, for nearly a mile; I rode, I walked, I sweat, I trembled, and my old knees failed; here are gullies, and rocks, and precipices; nevertheless, the way is as good as over the Table Mountain, bad as the best."

Joshua Cannon was on Bladen with Mr. Edney. He began to travel as an itinerant in 1790, and located in 1797. Sihon Smith, who will be noticed in another chapter, and Benjamin Denton traveled the circuit in 1793. This was Denton's first year in the Conference, and after traveling until 1797 he located.

¹Price's "Holston Methodism," page 229.





JAMES JENKINS.

For the next two years such men as William Bellamy, Robert Cox, Rufus Wiley, and John Shepherd served the Bladen Circuit. In 1796 Anthony Sale served all this large circuit alone; for the circuit embraced at least the following counties: New Hanover, Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen, Robeson, and Cumberland. And yet Asbury says in his Journal during this year, in speaking of Wilmington, "If we had men and money, it would be well to station a preacher in such places as Wilmington."¹

Then, there were other towns within the bounds of the circuit, and Asbury says in 1803 that Lumberton had "a hundred houses, with a courthouse, and prison, an academy, which serves as a church." Fayetteville was here also, and it was no doubt much larger. And yet Mr. Sale endeavored to occupy this great field. Anthony Sale was admitted in 1793, and appointed to Camden. He served successively Camden, Amherst, Franklin, Bladen, and Norfolk; and located in 1799.

In 1798 the circuit had three preachers, James Jenkins, M. Wilson, and T. Milligan. Jenkins was a man of great force, and made perhaps as much impression upon the people of the South Carolina Conference as any man who has ever labored in that section. He was admitted into the Conference in 1792. After a long and faithful service to the Church, he died without a struggle in Camden, S. C., on January 24th, 1847.

In reference to the work of Mr. Jenkins and his colleagues on Bladen, he says in his Memoir: "This year we

¹Asbury's Journal, Vol. II., page 327.

raised four new societies on Cape Fear River, and considerably enlarged the circuit. Before leaving I took occasion to visit Wilmington, where there was a small society of colored people with Meredith (once with Hammett) at their head."¹ They built a house of worship, and Meredith was acting as their pastor; but persecution raged to such a degree that the house was soon burned, and Meredith was in prison for several days. Soon after this the town itself was burned; and Meredith, undaunted, collected his people together in the market place, preached to them, among other things telling them, "as they loved fire so well God had given them enough of it," this being said in allusion to the burning of the town. James Jenkins in his autobiography, published in 1842, says: "I have been informed by a lady, acquainted with the facts, that there have been five fires in Wilmington since the burning of the church, and that one of the leading men in this affair has never prospered since."²

During the year they had great seasons of refreshing at various places on the circuit. At Conwayboro they took into the Church all the young folks in the community except two. Jenkins says, "I left the circuit, feeling much love for the kind people"; and yet he tells us that after wearing out the coat his mother gave him, he went around the circuit with only one sleeve.

Jesse Lee, in his History, says: "The first class of white people that was formed in Wilmington was joined together on the 24th of December, 1797. There were at

¹"Memoir of James Jenkins," 1842, page 86.

²Jenkins, page 86.

that time a few pious persons among the white people in that town, and one man that joined with us was a young preacher. But the blacks were much more attentive to religion than the whites."¹ In 1805 Dishop Asbury says: "Our chapel in Wilmington is excellent, sixty-six by thirty-six feet. Sabbath our enlarged house was filled with both colors." On his visit the next year: "We had 1,500 hearers in our chapel, galleried all round. I gave orders for the completion of the tabernacle and dwelling house according to the charge left me by William Meredith." It is not known definitely what this charge was. Meredith applied in 1798 for admission into the South Carolina Conference, but was refused, with the assurance that if he would come to the Conference the next year, show good behavior, and make over his meetinghouse in Wilmington to the Methodist Episcopal Church, they would receive him. When the question was discussed at the Conference in 1799, they refused to admit him, because he was not present and they had not learned whether he had made over the property or not.

Meredith died the latter part of 1799, leaving his dwelling and chapel to the Methodist Church, and Mr. Asbury refers to other property that was given which the records examined do not show. The ashes of William Meredith slept under the porch of the old Front Street Church in Wilmington until it was burned, and were then removed and buried under the pulpit of the new Grace Church.

In 1800 Wilmington was made a station, and Nathan

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 209.

Jarratt was appointed as its preacher. He joined the Conference in 1799; was a native of North Carolina; and served the Church until 1803, when he died. The minutes say, "A man of great zeal, pleasing address, and greatly beloved." Bladen Circuit was served this year by Jeremiah Norman and John Campbell. This was Campbell's first year in the itinerancy. He traveled until 1809, and located.

"In 1801 and 1802 that prince of Methodist preachers, Bennett Kendrick, was in Wilmington." In 1880 Dr. A. M. Chreitzberg, then editing the Conference minutes, wrote to Dr. Lovick Pierce, of Georgia, for a sketch of Mr. Kendrick, from which he gathered that Kendrick "was attractive in address, fine in style, liberal in thought, easy in delivery; indeed, there seemed to be an harmonious sympathy between his mind and his nerves in their influence on his muscles. His whole body seemed to preach, and every motion was a grace. He was then the brightest star in our Conference constellation." While he was young in years, he filled such important charges as Wilmington, Charleston, and Columbia. He was a native of Mecklenburg county, Virginia, admitted on trial in 1799, and went to his reward on April 5th, 1807. Hundreds on the appointments which he served could testify to his worth and superior ability in the pulpit.

In 1784 there were only 80 members reported from the Cape Fear section. In 1800 we find 778 whites and 345 colored members reported. At that time there were only 48 white members in Wilmington, while there were 231 colored. On the Bladen Circuit the proportions were re-

versed, for there were 720 whites and only 114 colored. At first Methodism was especially adapted to the country people, and the earnestness shown by its pioneers attracted the colored people. More of them would no doubt have joined on the Bladen Circuit if they had been permitted to attend the meetings. While the Methodist preacher was greatly interested in the souls of the black people, the owners of slaves did not understand it, and were often filled with suspicion. They kept their slaves at home for fear they would hear doctrines that were not according to the spirit of slavery. This feeling not only kept the slaves away, but prejudiced their masters against Methodism, and thus retarded its progress.

CHAPTER XIV.

SLAVERY IN RELATION TO METHODISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Colonies Protested Against Slavery—Not Profitable at the North—From the First Methodism Opposed Slavery—Wesley's Views—Freeborn Garrettson—Journal—Asbury's Position on the Subject—His Journal at Different Periods—Dr. Coke Opposes Slavery—Violence Threatened in Virginia—Debate of Coke and Lee at Green Hill's—Time Proved Lee's Position Wise—Progress of Methodism Checked—Suspicion of Slave Owners—Reuben Ellis Sought for Chaplain—Change in Wilmington—Wesley First to Consider Their Moral Condition—Many Christianized—Methodism Adapted to the Negro—Their Songs. Meredith Plants Methodism in Wilmington. Henry Evans in Fayetteville. Camp Meeting in Cape Fear Section.

THE "Negro Problem" did not originate in the dawn of the twentieth century, but is a question that has agitated the minds of some in Church and State ever since the introduction of slavery into this country. Soon after the first settlements of the whites upon the American shores, the love of gain showed itself in the introduction of African slavery. The early colonies protested against the traffic, but it was encouraged by England for the sake of commerce and wealth. Also New England encouraged it and participated in the traffic until they saw that the slave was unprofitable at the north. After the union of the states, the people saw they had a great evil upon their hands, and they began to discuss the question and to try to solve the problem. For over half a century the Methodist Church discussed it at almost every Conference.





FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

Methodism from the beginning has been pronounced upon the subject of slavery, and no doubt it had as much to do in abolishing the evil as any other organization. John Wesley gave no uncertain sound concerning his views on the subject, when he said: "I strike at the root of this complicated villainy. I absolutely deny all slaveholding to be consistent with any degree of natural justice. Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air, and no human law can deprive him of that right." Thus we see how the founder of Methodism regarded slaveholding. Many of the early leaders of Methodism were equally as pronounced as Mr. Wesley.

Freeborn Garrettson, a native of Maryland, and the companion of Asbury, referring to his experience on the day of his conversion in 1775, says: "This thought powerfully struck my mind, 'It is not right for you to keep your fellow-creatures in bondage. You must let the oppressed go free.' " Hitherto he had not felt that slaveholding was wrong, but now he had a conscience upon the subject, and at once set them free. Garrettson, when he was sent to North Carolina in 1777, made the following entry in his Journal: "In September I went to North Carolina, to travel Roanoke Circuit, and was sweetly drawn out in the glorious work, though my exercises were very great, particularly respecting slavery. Many times did my heart ache on account of the slaves in this part of the country, and many tears did I shed, both in Virginia and Carolina, while exhibiting a crucified Jesus to their view; and I bless

God that my labors were not in vain among them. I endeavored frequently to inculcate the doctrine of freedom in a private way, and this procured me the ill will of some who were in that unmerciful practice. I would often set apart times to preach to the blacks and adapt my discourse to them alone; and precious moments have I had. While many of their sable faces were bedewed with tears, their withered hands of faith were stretched out, and their precious souls made white in the blood of the Lamb. The suffering of these poor outcasts of men, through the blessing of God, drove them near the Lord, and many of them were truly happy.”¹

If we turn to Asbury’s Journal, we will see his manner of antagonizing slavery at such periods as may be indicated by the dates affixed to each paragraph following: (1780) “Spoke to some select friends about slave-keeping, but they could not bear it. This I know: God will plead the cause of the oppressed, though it gives offense to say so here. O Lord, banish the infernal spirit of slavery from thy dear Zion! Lord, help thy people. The Lord will certainly hear the cries of the oppressed, naked, starving creatures.” (1783) “We all agreed at the Virginia Conference in the spirit of African liberty, and strong testimonies were borne in its favor at our love feast. I pity the poor slaves. Oh, that God would look down in mercy and take their cause in hand!” (1785) “At the Conference in Virginia I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery, and a

¹“Life of Freeborn Garrettson,” page 60.

proposed petition to the General Assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. We waited on General Washington, who received us politely, and gave us his opinion against slavery." (1798) "My mind is much pained. I am brought to conclude that slavery will exist in Virginia for ages. There is not a sufficient sense of religion nor liberty to destroy it."

Dr. Coke, who was Bishop Asbury's associate, being set apart for the office of superintendent, in 1784, was hostile to slavery everywhere he went, in private and in public. When he was in Virginia in April, 1785, he preached on the evils of slavery, showing its "injustice in terms that were not calculated to flatter his auditors." Several left the house and threatened violence to the preacher. They were encouraged by a fashionable lady who offered fifty pounds if they would give the preacher a hundred lashes. He was at once surrounded by the mob, who seemed determined on violence, and Dr. Coke's life would have been in danger had it not been for the presence of a magistrate who had one of the leaders arrested. After giving vent to their rage in many words, the object of their vengeance escaped without further molestation. As a result of this service, however, several emancipated their slaves."¹

On the 14th of April Dr. Coke reached North Carolina, when he makes this entry in his Journal: "I have now done with my testimony against slavery for a time, being in North Carolina again."² But six days after this we find him in Conference at Green Hill's, preparing "a peti-

¹*Arminian Magazine*, 1789, page 345.

²"Life of Dr. Coke," by Samuel Drew, 1837, page 138.

tion to the legislature praying them to pass an act" that in a land which boasted of its independence slaveholders should at least be allowed to emancipate their slaves. At this time there was a law in North Carolina prohibiting emancipation of slaves except for meritorious conduct on the part of the slave. The Conference signed the petition. They were very sanguine of success for a time, as the governor had expressed to Bishop Asbury *his approbation of the measure*. While the Conference approved the measure, yet quite a heated debate followed on the subject. Dr. Coke was very earnest in his denunciation of the evils of slavery. Jesse Lee, who was a young man, though not afraid to speak of his convictions, even if they were contrary to those of the learned Dr. Coke, thought it was not wise for the preachers to press the subject of emancipation upon the people, as it would bring such general opposition as to prejudice the interest of the slave and preclude future attempts at emancipation; that the effect of such agitation would only create strife, and greatly hinder the spiritual interest of the Church; that it would separate the people from their pastors, and do much harm in many ways. This was a bold and manly speech; and from the way it stirred Dr. Coke, it must have made a profound impression. Dr. Coke drew the conclusion from the remarks, or the manner of expressing them, that Mr. Lee was opposed to the rules of the Conference, and was trying to justify slavery, so he objected to the passage of Mr. Lee's character. To which Lee at once replied, and being rudely interrupted as he thought, by Dr. Coke, his blood grew warm, and words were uttered by both which

no doubt they afterwards regretted. But Dr. Coke soon realized that he had made a mistake in his accusation and interruption, for which he apologized, and friendly feelings were soon restored.

Time soon proved that Mr. Lee's position was wise, as the following from the minutes of the Conference which met in Baltimore six months later will show: "The ministers were authorized "to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberation of a future Conference; and that an equal space of time be allowed all our members for consideration, when the minute shall be put in force." This did not mean that they had changed their position on the subject, for they affixed another minute to show their continued hostility to slavery, and that they were unalterably determined to stand firm against the practice: "We do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery, and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent measures." This was just what Jesse Lee contended for at the Conference at Green Hill's. He believed in exercising wisdom and prudence; a course which has not always been practiced by those who would exterminate this evil.

The progress of Methodism would have been much more rapid had these men of God spent more of their zeal to evangelize, and put forth less effort to set the slaves free. If it had not been for extremists on the subject, our progress would not only have been greater among the whites, but a greater number among the blacks would have been evangelized. The Methodist preachers were so pronounced against slavery that the

large slaveholders looked upon them with suspicion, and especially was this true in the Cape Fear section. They were looked upon as disorganizers and disturbers of the peace, hence some slaveholders were naturally afraid to trust their slaves with such men. The negro was valuable property, bringing from \$300 to \$1,800; so when it was known that the preachers were trying to set them free, the owners at once became antagonistic. This often impeded the preachers' usefulness. Of course this suspicion was not well founded. It was not the desire of any preacher to injure the slaveholders. No doubt he intended good for both the owner and the slave; but his zeal was not always according to knowledge. As soon as the people understood the motive of the preacher, they were satisfied.

An instance given by Bishop Capers confirms this statement. Reuben Ellis was one of the leading preachers in early Methodism. While traveling a district in South Carolina, he called upon Elias Ball, who was a wealthy and influential citizen of that state; and the conversation turned upon the good that might result from preaching to the negroes. It was proposed to make an experiment that evening by collecting them in the spacious piazza attached to Mr. Ball's mansion, for Mr. Ellis to preach to them. He preached accordingly; and Mr. Ball was so captivated with it as to urge for another evening's service. And before Mr. Ellis left, he offered him a salary of six hundred dollars and his board to remain permanently as his chaplain and preach to his negroes every Sabbath day.¹

¹"Autobiography of Bishop Capers," page 138.

When Bishop Asbury visited Wilmington in 1801, he says: "The minds of the people are strangely changed; and the indignation excited against us is past; the people see and confess that the slaves are made better by religion, and wonder to hear the poor Africans pray and exhort." It was the custom of many of our preachers to hold a service for the colored people directly after the morning service on Sunday, unless the gallery was sufficient to hold them, and in that case they worshiped with the whites. It will be observed in the study of Methodist history, and it is just to all concerned to state it here, that frequently it has been the case that those who made the loudest cry against the evils of slavery have done the least to brighten the pathway of this unfortunate race. As we have seen, Methodism has been from the first pronounced against slavery, and they had a right so to express themselves on the subject. In fact, it was a bold thing for a weak Church to take such a stand at that day. But there were many good people in the South who felt that the negro needed something else as much as he did his freedom. The problem of his enlightenment and evangelization was to be considered and solved. Asbury seemed to think before his death they could have done more for the negro if they had made no attempt at his emancipation, but had put all their efforts toward instructing him and bettering his condition. If they had confined themselves to this work, there would have been no friction between the slave owner and the Methodists.

So far as we know, John Wesley was the first to give special attention to the moral and religious training of the

negro in America. And when Methodism was introduced in the South, they at once began to try to uplift and evangelize them. During the period of which we write Methodism in North Carolina realized an obligation to give these heathen the gospel, as much as to carry it to some foreign shore. And while some may look back to slavery as a great evil, yet during the time of African slavery in the United States there were 700,000 converted to Christianity. In the year 1795 in North Carolina there were in the Methodist Church 8,414 white members, and 1,719 colored; and in 1800 the white members had decreased to 6,363, while the colored members had increased to 2,108. These figures show that Methodism was caring for the negro.

Methodism seems to have had a peculiar attraction for the negro. This can be accounted for, not only because they saw our interest for them, but because our religion was peculiarly adapted to them. It was a religion for the people, the common people, as well as for the more intelligent; a religion that appealed to the emotions as well as to the intellect. In a word, it was a religion of high spiritual life. The externality of religion was only a small part of Methodism at the beginning. A person in the early days of Methodism being recognized as a Methodist, without an experience, would have considered himself out of place. It was the emotional that caught the negro. Their songs and shouts thrilled his soul and set him on fire with enthusiasm, as did the songs sometimes from the gallery filled with the negroes thrill the whites with their sweet melodies, as they were caught up on the wings of some

old-time melody and carried for the time being to the land of rest where storm and trouble never come.

William Meredith, who was a very popular preacher among the colored people, came to Wilmington about the close of the eighteenth century, bought a lot in the suburbs and erected a church. While his venture was independent of the regular Church, he was on friendly terms with the regular preachers, and when he died he left his church and all of his property to the Methodist Church. His preaching was faithful and earnest, and was listened to by both white and black. Bishop Asbury visited this church and preached here in 1807. He speaks of hearing John Charles, a colored preacher, preach on "Now, no more condemnation," at sunrise. And after spending the Sabbath with this congregation, he says it was a "high day on Mount Zion." This church and the Episcopal church were the only churches here for a long time. Of course the Episcopal church had the advantage, as the wealthy people looked down upon the Methodist church as the "negro church."

The planting of Methodism in Fayetteville was by a negro preacher, and under peculiar circumstances. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was no church building in the town. The Presbyterians had an organization, but no church edifice. "One day there came to the place Henry Evans, a full-blooded negro shoemaker, who was going from Stokes county, North Carolina, to Charlestown, South Carolina, where he proposed to locate. He is thought to have been born free, and it is known that he was converted at an early age. He removed first from

Virginia to the neighborhood of Doub's Chapel, in what was then Stokes, but is now Forsythe, county. Here he stayed one year, and was licensed to preach by the Methodists."¹ When Evans saw the wickedness which abounded in Fayetteville, he decided to settle and preach to the negroes. His preaching was with great power. Bishop Capers says he was the "best preacher of his time in that quarter." He had not been preaching long before the "town council" interfered, and nothing that he could do would induce them to let him preach. He soon withdrew to the woods, out of town, where he held his meetings, "changing his appointment from place to place."

He was now out of the reach of the "council," so the mob took it up, and pursued him from time to time. It was hard for him to get an opportunity to explain himself and show the purity of his purpose. But he soon began to produce fruit which showed for itself. "One after another began to suspect their servants of attending his preaching, not because they were made worse, but wonderfully better. The effect on the public morals of the negroes, too, began to be seen, particularly as regarded their habits on Sunday, and drunkenness."² Public opinion was soon changed and Evans was allowed to preach in town, and it was not long before "distinguished visitors hardly felt that they might pass a Sunday in Fayetteville without hearing him preach." When the owners of these slaves saw what his preaching had done for them, they, too, began to attend his services, and the famous negro

¹Dr. J. S. Bassett, in "Historical Papers," Series IV., 1900, page 8.

²"Life of Capers," page 126.

preacher had some of the leading white people of the town to hear him. Among his first fruits were Mr. and Mrs. Lumsden, Mrs. Bowen, Mrs. Malsby, and Mr. and Mrs. Blake. A meetinghouse was erected, fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. The whites soon crowded out the blacks, and Evans asked the preacher on the Bladen Circuit to take this meetinghouse into the circuit.

Enough has been said to show that Henry Evans was a remarkable man. His deportment was humble and deferential toward the whites, "never speaking to a white man but with his hat under his arm, and never allowing himself to be seated in their houses." "The whites are kind to me, and come to hear me preach," he would say, "but I belong to my own sort, and must not spoil them." Perhaps his greatness is seen in his last speech as much as in any other one act of his life. It was customary for the white preacher to preach for the blacks directly after the morning service for the white people. "On Sunday before Evans died, as this meeting was being held, the door of the little rear room opened and the old man tottered in. Leaning on the altar rail, he said very simply: 'I have come to say my last word to you. It is this: None but Christ. Three times I have had my life in jeopardy for preaching the gospel to you, and if in my last hour I could trust to that, or to anything else but Christ crucified, for my salvation, all should be lost and my soul perish forever.'" Bishop Capers said these words were worthy not only of Evans, but of St. Paul.

The negroes often exhibited a strong faith, and were very fervent and earnest in prayer. James Jenkins, in

1802, tells how difficulties were overcome by the prayers of an old colored man. Jenkins was conducting a camp meeting near Wilmington, which began on Friday night, but the tents were not such as to protect them from the rain that was constantly falling. The people were discouraged. But Sunday morning about sunrise a negro man, belonging to brother Bell, "commenced praying near one of the tents," says Jenkins, and he and others soon joined him—his master among the rest; and the people having collected from every quarter, the work broke out and spread through all the community. Many souls were saved. This old colored man was the instrument selected by the Great Head of the Church to set this whole community on fire.

At another time James Jenkins, who was the presiding elder on the district, speaks of another colored man upon whom he makes quite a different comment. In a quarterly meeting held in an old house near Rockingham, he says, "we had some difficulties with an influential colored man, who desired further promotion in the Church. He became quite impatient and troublesome. I have generally found these people cannot bear promotion."¹ It will be a revelation to some people to know that the negro was ever permitted to hold any office in the Church so far south. But it seems he not only held an office, but was demanding a higher one.

Rev. Samuel McCorkle, a Presbyterian minister, giving an account of a great camp meeting, said by some to be

¹"Life of James Jenkins," page 110.

the first held in North Carolina, which began on January 1st,¹ 1802, in Randolph county, says that after the second sermon was delivered and the congregation dismissed, the people paused and would not go to their homes or encampments. Some one rose and gave a word of parting exhortation, when, as if by an electric shock, a large number in every direction,—men, women, children, white and black,—fell and cried for mercy. The first thing, he says that attracted his attention was a poor black man with his hands raised over the heads of the crowd and shouting, “Glory, glory to God on high!” As he was going toward the tent he saw another black man prostrate on the ground, and near by was an old colored woman grasping her mistress’s hand and crying, “O mistress! you prayed for me when I wanted a heart to pray for myself. Now, thank God, he has given me a heart to pray for you, and everybody else.”

A great deal has been said and written about the cruelty of masters to their slaves. This has, no doubt, been magnified. Dr. Alexander, in his “History of Mecklenburg County,” says: “There were not a half dozen cruel masters in Mecklenburg county. A man that was cruel to his slaves was tabooed by the white people, and would not be received into polite society.” To say that there was no cruelty or tyranny in administering discipline would be saying too much. Where there were large numbers on a plantation under an overseer, who was nothing but a hireling, it was often the case that the overseer was too op-

¹According to Foote’s “Sketches.”

pressive and cruel; but in such a case the slave had access to his master who, aside from considerations of humanity, had a financial interest to be guarded, and from an economical standpoint it was important that the poor creature should be properly cared for. But while many were caused to labor and carry heavy burdens, and in some instances unnecessarily punished, yet upon the whole we doubt not that in many respects the negroes were in a better condition then than now. Some have improved their opportunities, while many have made their conditions worse. For as a rule "the slave was as warmly clothed, as securely sheltered, and as bountifully fed as his master." The South has often been misrepresented, and has never been duly credited for what she has done for the negro since he first came to this clime. Even in the days of slavery the South did much for him, without permitting him to enjoy anything like social equality. Peep into that old Methodist home of more than a century ago, and see the negroes morning and evening bringing in their chairs and forming a circle around the family altar, while the father and master read from the old family Bible. And when the morning and evening hymn was sung, their musical voices could be heard in the great volume of praise that went up to the throne of grace. They worshiped in the same church, heard the same gospel, and communed at the same altar.

So when we consider their condition from the standpoint of religion and health, we are not sure that they were benefited by freedom. In the time of slavery their fare was plain, but abundant. And it is a characteristic of the

negro to be happy, when well fed and clothed, and not oppressed with overwork. So that it may be true, as Dr. Alexander in his "History of Mecklenburg County" says, that they had more real enjoyment prior to 1865 than they have ever had since. Yet their condition is not ideal now, and the negro problem is still being discussed, and one remedy after another is being presented. The question of slavery divided the Methodist Church in 1844, and later divided the Union, and caused some of the best blood of the North and South to be shed. And yet the negroes are with us, their condition not ideal, and many questions concerning them unsettled.

CHAPTER XV.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE YADKIN VALLEY, 1784 TO 1805.

Boundary Line of Salisbury Circuit. Location of Early Churches. John Hancock. Methodism Introduced into Salisbury. Mrs. Fishburn. Beverly Allen's First Sermon in Salisbury. James Foster Established a Preaching Place at Douthet's. Jesse Lee in Salisbury—His Journal—Lee's Colleague, Isaac Smith. Zion Church. Hope Hull. Henry Bingham. Richard Ivey. Reuben Ellis. R. J. Miller. Barnabas McHenry. Mark Moore. Some Statistics. John Tunnell. Bishop Asbury in This Section. Josiah Askew. John Fore. William Spencer. John N. Jones on the Salisbury Circuit. Congress of Methodism. Thomas Wilkerson. James Rogers. Claywell's Becomes a Preaching Place. Snow Creek. James Patterson—His Diary on Salisbury Circuit. Death and Burial of John Lee.

IN another chapter we learned that the Yadkin Circuit was formed in 1780 from the Pittsylvania Circuit, with twenty-one members, and extended from beyond the Blue Ridge to the South Carolina line. Andrew Yeargan was its first pastor. He planted Methodism in all that part of the state known as the Yadkin Valley. Salisbury Circuit was formed in 1783 from the Yadkin Circuit, with Beverly Allen, James Foster, and James Hinton as its pastors. They began with thirty members, but at the end of the year they reported a membership of three hundred and seventy-five, showing a net gain of three hundred and forty-five. It is difficult to find the exact boundary line of this circuit. The late Dr. M. L. Wood thought that it embraced Rowan, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Stokes, and parts of Randolph and Montgomery counties. There is

some doubt as to whether it extended so far north, as the Yadkin Circuit would in all probability embrace a part of this territory. Montgomery county at this period embraced what is now Stanly county, and it is quite sure that the preachers on the Salisbury Circuit in 1783 preached at Randall's, a few miles north of Norwood, and at several points in the forks of the Uwharrie and Yadkin rivers. For in all probability societies had been organized in this section previous to this date, Dr. Wood thinks as early as 1780.¹ Center, at first called Reeves's meetinghouse, is thought to be the oldest Methodist preaching place in this part of the country. It is located between Uwharrie and Yadkin rivers, in the upper part of Montgomery county. About eight miles north of Center, in the southern part of Randolph county, is Salem, which was organized about the same time. It was first called Russell's meetinghouse, by which it is known in Asbury's Journal. In December, 1793, Bishop Asbury came across Deep River, crossed Uwharrie at Fuller's Ford, and preached at Russell's, now Salem, where he met some people who had heard him "many years past" in Virginia. He was here again in 1798 in attendance upon a quarterly meeting. At a very early date another society was organized a few miles southeast of Center. It was called Hancock's meetinghouse, near Macedonia. John Hancock lived near the site of this church; he became a local preacher, and was or-

¹Many of these facts concerning Methodism in the forks of Uwharrie and Yadkin rivers are obtained from a manuscript prepared by Dr. M. L. Wood, whose father lived to be very old, having a remarkable memory to the last, and from him much of this information was received.

dained a deacon by Bishop Asbury on November 25, 1795. His faded ordination paper is now before me. This man was a power for good, not only in his immediate neighborhood, but for many miles around. His ashes now rest near the church which for many years honored him with his name. The local ministry did much in that day to plant Methodism in these scattered communities in North Carolina. On the east of Uwharrie there was another preaching place on the Salisbury Circuit, which was known at that time as Bell's meetinghouse, but the name was changed to Prospect. The above churches, with a number of others with the exception of Prospect, remained on the Salisbury Circuit until 1831, when the Randolph Circuit was formed.

Among the early preaching places further up the Yadkin we find Beal's, Whitaker's, McKnight's, and Olive Branch. The latter was located near Farmington in Davie county.¹

¹The following lines were composed by Dr. E. M. Griffin, of Farmington, while sitting near the ruins of this old church, on May 15, 1904:

"Thou hast crumbled to the dust, old pile;
Time hath wrought thy hallowed fall;
Around thy lonely doors clings ivy to the wall,
Shrouds with its bloom the hidden stile;
The mourners are scattered now,
Who oft have sought thy shrine;
Some with bent form, silvered brow,
Are left on the sinking sands of time.
For a hundred years thou hast stood,
And offered the olive branch of peace,
To soothe the souls of dying men, who would
Before thine altar their fetters of sin release."

In 1783 Methodism was introduced into Salisbury, and a small class was formed. One of the original members of this class was living as late as 1854, and from her in that year the facts in the following paragraphs were gathered by her pastor, Rev. S. V. Blake, of Bedford, Pa. She was the daughter of Mr. William Temple Cole, and was born in Cheraw, S. C., in 1763. Her parents moved to Salisbury when she was only two years old. Losing her father, her mother married Mr. William Thompson. During the great excitement of the Revolutionary War they moved to Maryland, where they spent two years. Here Miss Henrietta Cole was married to Philip Fishburn. After the war was over they returned to Salisbury.

Miss Cole, now Mrs. Fishburn, had received some early religious instruction from her father which had made a good impression. She formed a taste for reading in early life, which was never lost, and which accounts for the rich store of information she possessed. She was convicted at nine years of age and converted in her sixteenth year. While she had no spiritual adviser, the Holy Spirit seems to have been her guide and teacher from whom she learned something of the spiritual life. From the reading of "Pilgrim's Progress" she obtained much light and encouragement. At the time of her conversion she had never heard of the Methodists. But her conversion was bright and happy, and from that joyful hour she lost her relish for foolish and sinful amusements, and utterly refused to participate in a dancing party at her brother's, to the astonishment of all present. Her soul hungered for religious food, and she sought it from the Roman Cath-

olics, Quakers, and Dunkers; but it was all a disappointment to her.

Soon after her return to Salisbury, at the close of the war, it was announced that there would be preaching in a schoolhouse by a new kind of people, called Methodists. She knew nothing about that people, either good or bad; but rejoicing at the prospect of hearing the gospel, she went early to the place of preaching, and was expecting to see a minister resembling the old church parsons; but judge of her surprise, when, instead of a stout, good-looking, finely-dressed gentleman, with gown and surplice, in silk stockings and silver buckles, in walked a slender, delicate young man dressed in homespun cotton jeans. Though plainly attired, she perceived in his countenance unusual solemnity and goodness. The preacher was the Rev. Beverly Allen.

The impressions made upon her mind and heart by this sermon, the first she ever heard from a Methodist minister, were never effaced from her memory. The subject was experimental religion, explained and enforced. To her surprise, the preacher unfolded her entire experience, and seemed to give in detail all the exercises of her mind, from her first conviction for sin until she was made happy in the love of God. Not till then did she know that she enjoyed religion; although happy, she did not fully understand why. Her experience exactly agreeing with the word preached, she concluded that the preacher, an entire stranger, could not have known so much about her had not God revealed it to him. At his third visit he formed a small class, of which she was one. Such was the intro-

duction of Methodism into Salisbury, in the summer of 1783.

Rev. James Douthet, writing to a friend in 1834, when he was quite old, says that during this year, 1783, James Foster visited his father's house in Rowan county and established a preaching place that continued for many years, until a meetinghouse was built in the neighborhood. Foster was the first Methodist preacher that young Douthet ever saw. These early preachers had a very fine influence over Mr. Douthet, for he says: "I believe to the present day that the religion of Jesus Christ never appeared more in its native beauty and simplicity in its professors, since the days of the apostles and primitive fathers, than it did in the Methodist preachers in the infancy of Methodism."

The year following, Jesse Lee and Isaac Smith were sent to the Salisbury Circuit, and Philip Bruce was sent to the Yadkin Circuit. From the class of men sent to the Yadkin Valley for this year, 1784, we would judge that it was regarded as a very promising field; for they were among the strongest preachers in the connection. From the beginning, Mr. Lee met with great encouragement on the circuit. Congregations were large, and anxious to hear the word of life. He reached the circuit on the 9th of June, and on the 12th he met his colleague at Salisbury where they had an appointment to preach. Here Mr. Lee says in his Journal that he found "a society of truly affectionate Christians," to whom the reader has been introduced. While here Mr. Lee visited the spot near Salisbury where he was encamped with the army in 1780.

How different his mission now! He comes now among Christian friends to teach them the way of life. In order to see the spirit of this man of God and something of his field, his work, and the dangers to which he was exposed, we will let him speak for himself. We quote from his Journal:

"Sunday, 13th, I preached at Hern's, to a large company of solemn hearers. While I was speaking of the love of God, I felt so much of that love in my own soul that I burst into a flood of tears, and could speak no more for some time, but stood and wept. I then began again; but was so much overcome that I had to stop and weep several times before I finished my subject. There were very few dry eyes in the house. O my God! what am I that thou art mindful of me? It was a cross to me to come to this circuit, but now I feel assured that the Lord will be with and support me.

"The next day I preached at brother Carter's, where I spoke, with many tears, to a weeping congregation.

"Wednesday, 16th, I preached at John Randall's, with some liberty. The man of the house was always deaf and dumb, yet can pronounce the name of his wife and the name of his brother very distinctly; but I could not learn that he ever uttered any other word. He is esteemed a pious man, and by signs will give a good experience of grace, both of his conviction and conversion, and of his progress in the service of the Lord; of the pleasing hope he has of heaven when he leaves this world.

"Thursday, 17th, I preached at C. Leadbetter's on Amos iv. 12, 'Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!' I bless

God for that meeting; my heart was greatly affected, and my eyes overflowed with tears. Toward the end of my discourse, the hearers were so much wrought upon that I was in hopes of seeing some of them converted before the close of the meeting.

"Sunday, 20th, I preached at Cole's, but the congregation was so large that the house would not hold them; of course we had to look for another place; we got under the shade of some trees, where I spoke with great freedom, and with a heart drawn out in love to the souls of people; and I felt a longing desire to be instrumental in bringing their souls to God. When I met the class, the friends wept greatly while they heard each other tell of the goodness of God to their souls. The comfort I felt on serving God that day would make amends for the sufferings of a thousand troubles,—let the people praise thee, O God! let all the people praise thee.

"Wednesday, 23d [he observed], I preached at what is called Jersey meetinghouse, Davidson county; we had a good meeting, and I was happy in God while I was speaking. When I had finished, Colonel G——s's wife came to me and began to cry, and said, 'I know I am the worst creature in the world; my heart is so hard I don't know what to do,' and begged me to pray for her. I hope she is not far from the kingdom of God."

Minton Thrift, in his "Memoirs of Jesse Lee," says: "A few days after the date of the above extract, he experienced a very singular display of Providence, in the preservation of his life. Crossing Yadkin River, it being deep, the current strong, and he not being well acquainted

with the ford, he presently found himself among cragged rocks which were concealed from his view by the darkness of the waters; this was a critical juncture; for one moment his horse was swimming, then plunging over the points of rugged rocks. While Mr. Lee was encumbered with a greatcoat, with his saddlebags on his arm, and being but an indifferent swimmer, he had but little expectation of being delivered from the danger which then threatened him; but through the good providence of God he was brought through unhurt, and his life preserved for future usefulness."

Mr. Lee's colleague, Isaac Smith, was also a man of ability, though this was his first year in the ministry. In 1785 he was appointed to the Tar River Circuit. The next year he was with Henry Willis in Charleston. He continued to travel as a circuit preacher and presiding elder until 1796, when excessive labors proved too much for his strength; for which cause he was located until 1820, when he was readmitted and appointed to Columbia. In 1821 he was presiding elder of the Athens District, Georgia. On account of failing health, it became necessary for him to take a superannuate relation in 1827. He was the oldest, and most honored and beloved of all the preachers. After much suffering, he died of a cancer July 30th, 1834, full of faith and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, aged seventy-six years, and for more than half a century a minister of the gospel.¹

¹Facts gathered from the Minutes, Vol. II., page 346. It is said that he wrote memoirs of himself, but we are unable to say if they were ever published. Rev. James Patterson wrote an extended

The Conference met at Green Hill's on April 20th, 1785; and Joshua Hartley and Hope Hull were sent to the Salisbury Circuit, and Henry Bingham and Thomas Williamson to the Yadkin Circuit, with Richard Ivey as presiding elder.¹ Little is known of Mr. Hartley, but Hope Hull became one of the best-known men in the Church. He was a native of Maryland; was born March 13th, 1763. He was sent at an early age to Baltimore, where he was apprenticed to a house carpenter and remained until he joined the Conference in 1785, at which time he was appointed to the Salisbury Circuit. In 1786 he was appointed to the Pee Dee Circuit in South Carolina. During this year he organized a society at Zion, near Mount Gilead, in Montgomery county, North Carolina. For many years it was called Scarborough's meetinghouse. It became a strong church, where camp meetings were held annually for fifty years. It was the home church of Rev. Lewis Scarborough, of the South Carolina Conference; and later, of the Rev. D. R. Bruton, late of the North Carolina Conference.²

Of Hope Hull's work on the Pee Dee Circuit, Dr. Shipp says: "His popularity in the Pee Dee country was unbounded, and his name, like that of Martin, was perpet-

memoir of him, and published it in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* of January 9, 1835.

¹They were simply called elders at that time, which meant about the same as presiding elders in our day; hence we use the term as used to-day.

²We are indebted to brother H. M. Scarborough, of Mount Gilead, for facts concerning Zion church. His father was a local preacher, who not only preserved some of the history of this section, but helped to make much of it.

uated by incorporation as a family name in many households." Dr. Coke was delighted with him, and in speaking of his work makes this mention of him: "Mr. Hull is young, but is indeed a flame of fire. He appears always on the stretch for the salvation of souls." In 1787 he was sent to Amelia Circuit, Virginia; 1788, Washington, Georgia; 1792, with Jesse Lee in New England; 1794, Asbury's traveling companion. He ended his warfare on October 4th, 1818, at the age of fifty-five.

From the account given of him in "Sprague's Annals" by Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce, he must have been a preacher far above the average. He was a fine specimen of an old-fashioned Methodist preacher. His oratory was natural. He never spoiled his speaking by scholarship restraints. He improved every opportunity of doing good,—was always ready to represent his Lord. As an evidence of this statement, the following story is told. He was invited to a house to spend the night where a ball was to be held, and when requested to dance, "he took the floor and remarked aloud, 'I never engage in any kind of business without first asking the blessing of God upon it, so let us pray.' Quick as thought the preacher was on his knees praying in the most earnest manner for the souls of the people, that God would open their eyes to see their danger, and convert them from the error of their ways. All present were amazed and overwhelmed; many fled in terror from the house, while others, feeling the power of God in their midst, began to plead for mercy and forgiveness. After the prayer, he said, 'On to-day four weeks I expect to preach at this house,' and quietly retired. On the ap-

pointed day the inhabitants for miles around were assembled, and heard one of the most eloquent and powerful sermons that ever fell on human ears. From the work begun in a ballroom a most powerful revival of religion extended in every direction, and many were added to the Church."¹

Henry Bingham, 1785, was on the Yadkin Circuit. This was his first year in the itinerancy. He was a native of Virginia; and after being admitted into the Conference, he traveled Yadkin, Salisbury, Pee Dee, and Edisto circuits. He was a student and a very serious, earnest, and faithful servant of the Master. He was zealous and fervent in his preaching. At Cattle Creek camp ground, in Edisto Circuit, he died in 1788. In his last hours he had peace and resignation.

Thomas Williamson, his colleague on the Yadkin Circuit, was a very laborious and successful preacher. He wore himself out in the intinerancy, dying in great peace near Lexington, Kentucky. During the three years following the one spent on the Yadkin Circuit, he assisted such men as Poythress and Wilson Lee in spreading a

¹See the Centennial edition of the Athens, Ga., *Daily Banner*, of June 16, 1901. Here the editor gives a short sketch of this eloquent preacher. The house in which he lived is still standing next below Oconee Street Church. He established the Washington Academy of Athens in the early part of the nineteenth century. He was an active trustee of the university, and at one time acting president. His three children were born in Athens. Asbury Hull was a lawyer and a man of affairs, being a planter, banker, first president of the Southern Mutual Insurance Company, and was prominent in the Church and the State. Dr. Henry Hull was a physician and trustee of the university, and was at one time professor of mathematics in that institution.

flame of revival fire over the wild and uncultivated regions of Kentucky.

Richard Ivey this year was presiding elder of a district embracing Caswell, Salisbury, and Halifax circuits. He was made an elder at the organization of the Church, and most of his itinerant life was spent in that office. He traveled extensively in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. He was a native of Sussex county, Virginia; and after spending eighteen years in the itinerancy, he died at his home in Virginia. The minutes say "he was a man of quick and solid parts; that he sought not himself." Thomas Ware, a young preacher who accompanied him to an appointment on one occasion, relates this anecdote of him: "The conduct of the English preachers who had been loyal to their king had excited toward the Methodist preachers a general feeling of distrust on the part of the patriots. The native American preachers were all in full sympathy with the colonists, but often they had to encounter this, to them, painful and dangerous suspicion. Some soldiers where Ivey was preaching had loudly threatened to arrest the next Methodist preacher that came along. Ivey's appointment was near where the army was in camp. He went to his appointment. The soldiers came, and the officers, walking to the table, crossed their swords upon it. The brave little man took for his text, 'Fear not, little flock.' As he preached he spoke of the folly of fearing the soldiers of freedom, and throwing open his bosom he said, 'Sirs, I would fain show you my heart; if it beats not high for liberty, may it cease to beat.' The soldiers were con-

quered, and they left the house huzzaing for the Methodist parson."

At the Conference held in Salisbury in February, 1786, Reuben Ellis was appointed presiding elder, with Salisbury, Yadkin, and Holston circuits forming the district. Salisbury had for its preachers Thomas Williamson and Henry Bingham; while Robert J. Miller and John Mason were sent to Yadkin Circuit.

The presiding elder, Reuben Ellis, was one of the leaders of early Methodism. He was a native of North Carolina. His name first appears on the minutes in 1777, when he was appointed as a colleague of Dromgoole to Amelia Circuit, Virginia. He died in Baltimore, his last station, in the month of February, 1796. At his death the minutes said of him: "It is a doubt whether there be one left in all the connection higher, if equal, in standing, piety, and usefulness." He gave his life to the preaching of the gospel, willing to make any sacrifice and endure any hardship in order to make full proof of his ministry. The minutes further say: "In twenty years of labor, to our knowledge, he never laid up twenty pounds by preaching." "He was not only a man of one work, but a man of God." "He, like Fletcher, lived as on the verge of eternity, enjoying much of the presence of God. He was always ready to fill any station to which he was appointed, although he might go through the fire of temptation and waters of affliction." He was a man of large stature but slender constitution. He was a wise leader, and a true friend. As a preacher he was "weighty and powerful." His labors extended from the state of Geor-

gia to Baltimore. Bishop Asbury, in his Journal, says of him: "I was somewhat alarmed at the sudden death of Reuben Ellis, who hath been in the ministry upward of twenty years; a faithful man of God, of slow but very solid parts. He was an excellent counselor, and a steady yoke-fellow in Jesus."

Robert J. Miller, who was one of the preachers on the Yadkin Circuit this year, was sent before the close of the year west of the Catawba, to form a circuit in Lincoln. However, he did not form a circuit or organize a church. He soon fell in with a large settlement of German Lutherans, who received him kindly, and he was soon induced to become their pastor at "Old White Haven." He became dissatisfied with that congregation, and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church. "He finally settled, lived, and died near the present town of Lenoir, N. C.¹

John Mason began his itinerant life with Mr. Allen in 1785; was admitted on trial in 1786, serving the Yadkin Circuit his first year in the itinerancy. He traveled the Broad River Circuit in 1787, where he did a great work. It does not appear that he took an appointment after this.

¹In the "History of the North Carolina Synod," page 19, we get the following facts, from which we conclude that he was at least very changeable. He was born in Scotland; came to America and located in Charleston, Mass., in 1774. At the close of the Revolutionary War we find him in Virginia, and in 1784 he joined the Methodist Church and was licensed to preach. While he was lay reader for the Episcopal congregation at White Haven in Lincoln county, they desired his ordination, and, there being no Episcopal diocese in North Carolina at the time, petitioned the Lutheran pastors for his ordination. Five Lutheran pastors met and ordained him, and he was the second pastor ever ordained by the Lutheran ministry in North Carolina.

For the year 1787 Reuben Ellis was returned to the district. Henry Bingham was sent to the Pee Dee Circuit; W. Partridge, B. McHenry, and J. Connor to the Yadkin, and Mark Moore to the Salisbury circuits. Barnabas McHenry and James Connor had just been admitted into the Conference. The career of the latter was brief—only serving about two and a half years. He fell at his post on the Buckingham Circuit in 1790. "A pious, solid, understanding man. His gifts were improvable, and promised usefulness to the Church. In the midst of a blameless life he was suddenly taken away from labor and suffering, and blessed with confidence in his last moments."

Barnabas McHenry was quite young, having barely reached his majority. In the year 1788 he was sent west to the Cumberland Circuit, on the very borders of the white population. Here he was surrounded with many dangers. Indians would often mercilessly attack the pale faces who invaded their territory. But God gave them success, and the wilderness and solitary places often resounded with the shouts of the converted. He traveled circuits until 1792, when he was appointed presiding elder of the Holston District. Here he was exposed to the savages and all the difficulties of traveling without roads or bridges, yet he urged his way through the tangled thickets and dense forests, across rapid streams and craggy mountains, preaching Christ in log cabins in the most desolate regions. He located in 1797 on account of declining strength from overtaxed exertions. But in this relation his zeal for Christ was unabated, taking an active

part in the great revival of 1800. In 1819 he reëntered the traveling connection and again took his place in the itinerant field.¹

McHenry possessed a high order of intellect and acquired a good share of learning considering the few advantages of that day. All his powers were given to the Church. His laborious life ended in peace on June 16, 1833, after preaching the gospel for half a century. Such a life is a worthy example for emulation.

Mark Moore had all the Salisbury Circuit by himself. He entered the Conference in 1786, and was appointed to Holston; in 1787, to Salisbury; 1789, to Santee; 1798, to Broad River; in 1799, located. In 1819 he was stationed in New Orleans. Dr. Shipp says of him: "He possessed every requisite qualification to render him an eloquent and effective preacher of the gospel, and if he had continued in the regular itinerant work he would have become truly a polished shaft in Jehovah's quiver. He was a fine scholar and good educator, but unfortunate in the management of his temporal affairs. He lived to be quite aged, and to the last was the faithful and holy man of God."

We find the following membership reported for this year, 1787: Salisbury, 391 whites and 24 colored; Yadkin, 517 whites and 20 colored; Pee Dee, 790 whites and 33 colored. These were large circuits, manned by heroic men, and while the growth was not rapid, it was a wonderful progress under all the circumstances. They were laying a foundation upon which we are building to-day.

¹Finley's "Western Methodism," page 152.

At the Conference in 1788 the presiding elders' districts were made very much larger than heretofore. John Tunnell was appointed presiding elder of the Yadkin District. His district embraced the following circuits: Roanoke, Caswell, New Hope, Guilford, Salisbury, Yadkin, and Halifax. This district embraced as much territory as that embraced by the North Carolina Conference at present. Bishop Asbury passed through a part of this district in April, and makes this entry in his Journal: "We crept for shelter into a little dirty house, where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade. We felt the want of fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet." And again in 1793 he says while in this territory: "I have little desire to come here again—we can hardly get entertainment. . . . I determined to haste along, and made it about thirty miles to F——'s, in the cove of the mountain; where we rested in peace, after getting a little Indian bread, fried bacon, and drinking some of our own tea. Our lodging was on a bed set upon forks, and clapboards laid across, on an earthen floor cabin. But worse than all the rest, these people decline in religion. I feel awful for them on this account. Next morning, about sunrise, we took the path up the mountain."

John Tunnell was a frail, delicate man; and how he traveled this large district, enduring the hardships and exposures incident thereto, we are unable to say. It must have been by grace that he was enabled to go and to endure as he did. "He was truly an apostolic man; his heavenly-mindedness seemed to shine on his face, and

made him appear more like an inhabitant of heaven than of earth.”¹ He was received on probation at the Conference in 1777, and was sent to the famous Brunswick Circuit. He was appointed as one of the original elders at the organization of the Church, though he was not present at the memorable Christmas Conference. “He had gone in quest of health to the West India island of St. Christopher’s, where he was offered a good salary, a house, and a slave to wait upon him, if he would remain as a pastor; but he declined the offer, and returning, was ordained, and resumed his travels in the states with great success.”² Lee says “his gifts as a preacher were great.” Stevens says, “Tunnell was one of the most eloquent preachers of that age.”

In 1778 he traveled the Baltimore Circuit. After several years of indefatigable labors in the middle states, he was sent by the Conference in 1787 with four others, “among whom was young Thomas Ware, beyond the mountains, to the Holston country, now called East Tennessee.” He thus scaled the Alleghanies, and takes historical rank among the founders of Methodism in the great valley of the west. His last appointment was in this frontier field (1789), where he fell at the head of a little corps of seven itinerants, who were on four circuits, after thirteen years of faithful services, a victim of consumption. He died near “Sweet Springs” in July, 1790; his brethren bore his remains over the mountains, about five miles, where Asbury preached his funeral, and interred

¹Atkinson’s Memorials, page 204.

²Stevens, Vol. II., page 34.

him there among the hills of western Virginia, where he sleeps without a memorial; but his name will live forever in the "record on high," if not on earth.¹

Asbury came down on John's River during April and spent a few days in that section. In speaking of the work, he says: "Our preachers on the Yadkin Circuit have been sick; they have had hard traveling the past winter; and the work has consequently suffered."

In 1789 Sihon Smith, Julius Connor, and Josiah Askew were on the Salisbury Circuit. Sihon Smith served only a few years in the itinerancy. He was admitted into the Conference in 1786, and located in 1792. Josiah Askew began to travel in 1788, and located in 1798. His first circuit was Halifax; the next, Salisbury; the next, Bertie; the next, Sussex; the next, Richmond and Manchester; the next, Brunswick. After this he was presiding elder until he located. Joseph Travis thinks he located from necessity, the allowance not being ample for a support. Travis says: "His praise was in all the churches where he was known, as a gifted preacher, a zealous, humble, and holy Christian, doing much good wherever he labored. He ought not to be forgotten by us."

The Yadkin Circuit was blessed with two men, this year, who had great spiritual power and force, and who were instrumental in kindling a revival flame that spread all over North Carolina and the west—namely, Daniel Asbury and John McGee. During this year they went beyond the Catawba with a view of forming a circuit in

¹Stevens, Vol. II., page 35.

that section. Of these men we will have more to say in another chapter.

In 1793 John Fore was on the Yadkin Circuit, having been admitted in 1788, and traveling until he located in 1797. David Haggard was on the Salisbury Circuit. He was a "faithful, acceptable, and useful preacher." He was admitted in 1787, and labored on Banks, Anson, and Halifax circuits. He traveled two years in Kentucky; one year on New River Circuit, and in 1793 on the Salisbury, after which his name disappears from the minutes. He then became connected with the O'Kelly schism, but afterwards joined the New Lights and died in their communion."¹

During the year 1794 William Spencer was appointed presiding elder of the district embracing Salisbury, Yadkin, Anson, and Swannanoa circuits; and in addition to his duties as presiding elder, he was appointed one of the preachers on the Salisbury Circuit. Spencer was admitted on trial in 1789, and located in 1797. Christopher S. Mooring was on the Yadkin, and Henry Ledbetter on Anson. Ledbetter served in the itinerant ranks from 1787 to 1795, when he located. It will be noticed that very few remain in the traveling connection; they soon drop out from one cause or another. Henry Hill was on the Yadkin Circuit in 1795, but after traveling six years he located in 1797; and Charles Ledbetter, who was his colleague on the Yadkin Circuit, only traveled from 1794 to 1799. David Thompson was on the Salisbury Circuit for the first and second quarters, and on the Yadkin the third quarter.

¹Collins's "Kentucky," page 126.

He was in the itinerant ministry only three years, from 1794 to 1797.

In 1796 John N. Jones was appointed to the Salisbury Circuit. He had been in the traveling connection since 1790, and was a man of great zeal, "not wanting in sound understanding, a fervent preacher, plain in his manners and address, manifesting himself wherever he went to be a Christian and a Christian minister." After being worn-out with pain and a variety of weaknesses and afflictions of body, he died in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1798.

Mr. Jones had for his colleague on the Salisbury Circuit William Lambuth, a man who for many years was a blessing to the Church, and whose descendants are with us to-day a blessing and an honor to the Church. He was admitted on trial in 1796 and appointed as second man to Salisbury; 1797, Contentney; 1798, Greenville. In 1800 he traveled the Cumberland Circuit in Tennessee, and at the close of his labors here he married Miss Elizabeth Greenhaw, the ceremony being performed by Rev. John McGee. He located near Hartsville in Tennessee, where he resided for many years, and then removed to Sumner county, Tenn., where he died in 1837. After his location he continued to preach, and was very useful as a local preacher. He had two sons who became useful and prominent ministers of the gospel. One of his sons, Rev. John W. Lambuth, was a missionary to China and Japan, and was the father of Rev. Walter R. Lambuth, our present Missionary Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The Conference this year reported nine itinerants who have died. This number was rather large. Two of them

were natives of North Carolina, and one of them, Reuben Ellis, was no doubt reared in the Yadkin Valley section. He was a man far above the average in attainments, a safe counselor and guide, and a strong preacher. He gave twenty years to the itinerancy. Richard Ivey gave eighteen years of service to the Church, traveling from New Jersey to Georgia.

The Salisbury and Yadkin circuits were now among the strongest in the connection. Salisbury reported a membership of 574, while Yadkin reported 679 white and colored; and at this time there is only one other state that reported more members than North Carolina. Virginia had 13,779; North Carolina had 8,713; while New York followed with the next highest number, 4,039; and South Carolina the next. It will be seen by these figures that North Carolina and Virginia were the strongholds of Methodism.

In the year 1797 the Yadkin and Salisbury circuits were served by four men—Humphrey Wood, John Harper (who was admitted in 1795 and located in 1803), Duke W. Hullum, and John King. Only two deaths among the ministers were reported in the minutes for 1797, while nine were reported last year. Salisbury Circuit reported this year 733 members, which shows a net gain of 159.

Salisbury and Yadkin were ably served in 1799, by Thomas Wilkerson on the Yadkin and James Douthet and James Denton on the Salisbury, with James Rogers as presiding elder, his district extending from the French Broad to Mattamuskeet, with fifteen pastoral charges. These were strong men in their day. Thomas Wilkerson,

in giving an account of his work on the circuit, says: "In the spring of 1799 I rejoined the Virginia Conference, and was sent to Yadkin Circuit, North Carolina. This was a laborious circuit, as at that time it took in that range of high mountains running through Buncombe county. Here I saw but little fruit of labor."¹

Thomas Wilkerson was received on trial in 1793, and after traveling ten years in the Virginia Conference he located and removed to the west. Here he resumed his labors, and was very useful. He married and settled, and his house was the resting place of many a weary itinerant. He was highly esteemed for his talents and piety. Bishop Paine compared him to Bishop Roberts in his intellectual, moral, and social characteristics.

James Rogers, the presiding elder, was admitted on trial in 1791, and received an appointment to Gloucester Circuit; 1792, Orange; 1793, Amelia; 1794, Sussex; 1795, Edisto; 1796, Washington; 1797, Camden; 1798, Newbern District; and in 1799 on the same district, though much enlarged. In all the above stations he was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, and labored acceptably and profitably. In doctrine he was clear and comprehensive, and his love for souls led him to enforce the doctrine of salvation with great zeal and energy. For the salvation of souls was the great end at which he aimed, and to the accomplishment of this end he directed all his labors. He located in 1801, and through the remaining days of his

¹Letter written by Thomas Wilkerson in 1841 to Rev. J. B. McFerrin, for the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.

life he demonstrated the truth of the gospel which he had preached by a godly and upright walk.

In 1800 Nathaniel Walker and John Ellis were on the Yadkin Circuit, and Abner Henly and Jeremiah King were appointed to Salisbury. Abner Henly was admitted on trial in 1791. He served two years in the South Carolina Conference, and devoted the remainder of his itinerant labors to North Carolina. He located in 1796, but was appointed to Salisbury in 1800.

Jesse Lee, in his History, says: "High up the Yadkin River the work of the Lord was very great, and more or less people were frequently converted at public preaching. One preacher said he preached as often as his strength would admit of, and the power of God attended his meetings, and from three to four, and sometimes from seven to eight, were brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, at a meeting."¹ He formed a society at Snow Creek of about fifty members. This was in 1802. Peter Claywell, his wife and two daughters, moved from Virginia in 1800 to the neighborhood of Snow Creek in Iredell county, North Carolina. They joined the Methodists before leaving Virginia, and when they reached their new home they opened it for preaching. For some years it appeared among the preaching appointments as Claywell's. A church was built later, and called Snow Creek. During this year one of the preachers received about fifty members in going once round the Yadkin Circuit.

In 1803 James Patterson traveled the Salisbury Circuit.

¹Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 284.

For several years he kept a diary, which at least shows the extent of the circuit. He entered the circuit on the 26th of August, 1802, going from Guilford county to Mr. Philip Howard's in Surry county; rested on the 27th, and went to his circuit the next day. "On Saturday, 28th, I rode to the quarterly meeting at Whitaker's meetinghouse, Rowan county, Salisbury Circuit." "August 31st, I preached at Captain Matthew Markland's, Stokes county, to a very cold congregation."

September 1st, he was at McKnight's meetinghouse, near Clemmons ville. September 2d, "Preached at Henry Steel's to a tolerably large congregation." September 3d, "Crossed the Yadkin River at the Shallow Ford and preached at William Howard's in Surry county." 4th, "Preached at a schoolhouse with some power." 5th, "Preached at Whitaker's meetinghouse." 6th, "Rode eight miles to Beal's meetinghouse. After preaching I rode to brother John McMahan's." 7th, "Rode to George Gentle's, and preached there on the 8th," but he says he "felt the want of liberty." 9th, "After marrying James Douthet and Susannah Howard, I rode to brother Hardy Jones's (Rowan county) and preached to a small number." 10th, "Rode to Mr. Chapman's, about twenty-eight miles." 11th, "Preached at a bridge about a mile from his house on the Salisbury road to a tolerably large congregation." 12th, "Preached at Pool's meetinghouse to a cold congregation." 13th, "Preached at Hearne's meetinghouse in Cabarrus county." 14th, "Preached at Jacob Carter's, Montgomery county, to a tolerably large congregation." 15th, "Preached at Taylor's meetinghouse." 16th,

"Preached at Hancock's meetinghouse [now Macedonia, near Eldorado]." 17th, "Rode eight miles and preached at Benjamin Bell's on Uwharrie River." 18th, "Preached at Hancock's meetinghouse." 19th, "Preached at Reeves's meetinghouse to a large congregation." 20th (Randolph county), "Preached at brother William Monett's to a pretty large number of people." 21st, "Preached in an old house to a small congregation." 22d, "Preached at brother Twoney's to a hard-hearted congregation." 23d, "Rode twelve miles to Russell's meetinghouse in Randolph county." 24th, "Rode seven miles to Jones's meetinghouse." 25th, "To Plumber's meetinghouse." 26th, "Sunday, rode ten miles and preached at Feel's meetinghouse to a small congregation." 27th, "Rode to Captain Matthew Markland's, about twenty-two miles [Stokes county]."¹

The Salisbury Circuit, in 1803, embraced a territory extending from near Troy in Montgomery county to what is now Yadkin county. James Patterson had appointments in Stokes, Forsythe, Yadkin, Rowan, Davidson, Cabarrus, Stanly, Montgomery, and Randolph. He traveled and preached almost every day in the week. By glancing over this territory at present, the reader will see what progress has been made.

James Patterson says: "I began to travel as an itinerant preacher, by the direction of Reuben Ellis, on the 16th day of November, 1793, and continued thus to travel until the beginning of the year 1795, at which time I was ad-

¹Diary of James Patterson. It is quite meager, but is of some value in showing circuit boundaries, and locating churches, etc.

mitted on trial, in the twentieth year of my age, at Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina; was ordained deacon the eighth of January, 1797, and ordained elder on the fourth day of January, 1799; was about fifteen years old when I joined the Methodist Church. I was born the 23d day of January, 1773, near Orangeburg, South Carolina."¹ At the time of his death, in 1858, he was the oldest member of the North Carolina Conference. He was for many years on the superannuate list, and resided on his farm near Olin, Iredell county. Dr. J. E. Edwards says: "James Patterson possessed fine native ability, was an able preacher, and did good work in the itinerant ministry."²

In 1801 one of the pioneer preachers died in Wilkes county, on October the sixth. John Lee, the brother of Jesse Lee, was traveling in Virginia and western North Carolina, trying to improve his declining health. He spent some time with James Parks and Thomas Moss, with whom he was acquainted. He rode up to the widow Brown's who lived in the eastern part of Wilkes county, on or near the road leading from Hamptonville to Wilkesboro. He reached there in the afternoon, and soon told them that he should die there that night, to their great surprise. He then turned over some valuable papers to his servant and gave him directions how to get home, etc.³

¹In reply to a question asked by the editor of the *North Carolina Christian Advocate* in 1856, Mr. Patterson gave the above memorandum. This is fortunate, as there was no memoir prepared for the minutes.

²Virginia Conference Journal for 1882.

³"Life of John Lee," by his brother, Jesse Lee, 1805, page 173. A very rare book.

He told him, "After I am dead go down and get brother Moss and brother Parks to come up and bury me." After engaging in prayer a time or two, and directing that his love be sent to loved ones at home, he died in great peace.

The brother Parks mentioned was the Rev. James Parks, who traveled from 1788 to 1795, and who was living at Buck Shoals. The brother Moss mentioned above lived about two and a half miles from Buck Shoals, and near the road leading from Hamptonville to Statesville, via Eagle Mills. They secured the remains of John Lee and buried them on a hill near Thomas Moss's house. The spot is about one mile from where one of the Salisbury roads, leading to Wilkesboro, crosses the road above mentioned. In 1844 Stephen Denny identified the grave, and Rev. James L. Nicholson, who was on the Jonesville Circuit, and Rev. T. A. Nicholson erected a stone wall three by eight feet, and two feet high, over the spot.¹ That so few of these early pioneers' graves can be identified is our excuse for giving so much space to the grave of John Lee. Their last resting places should be sacred to us, because these heroes blazed out the way and made possible what we enjoy to-day.

¹A few years ago the author, in company with Rev. H. M. Blair, stood by this lonely itinerant's grave, and gave his name and date of his death to a man in the community who said the grave should be properly marked.

CHAPTER XVI.

WEST OF THE CATAWBA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Boundaries of the Yadkin. R. J. Miller. Emigrants from Brunswick—Incident on the Way. Old Whitehaven. Enoch George Comes to Help form a Circuit—Greatly Discouraged—Bishop Asbury Writes Him a Letter. Rehoboth Church Erected—First Built West of the Catawba. The Hard Fare of the Preachers. Daniel Asbury Before a Justice of the Peace—Daniel Asbury's Labors—His Last Letter to the Conference. Jesse Richardson—Incidents of Great Sufferings and Hardships. Opposition to the Methodists. The Pioneers Adapted to Their Work. Revival in the Woods. The Mills Family.

METHODISM was probably introduced into this section as early as 1780, for we have good reasons to believe that the Yadkin Circuit at this time embraced the entire territory from the head waters of the Dan and Uwharrie rivers westward to the French Broad and Nollichucky. But while this circuit was made to embrace all this territory, we know that Andrew Yeargan, or his successors on this circuit, could not have cultivated this vast field. So there was very little organizing, if any, west of the Catawba before 1787. R. J. Miller had been sent in 1786 as a missionary to occupy this territory and to form a circuit in the county of Lincoln; but coming into this section, he found a large settlement of Germans, and he began to act as their pastor and did no work as a Methodist.

In 1787 a number of Methodists moved from the Brunswick Circuit in Virginia and settled in Lincoln county near the Catawba River. The late Rev. M. V.

Sherrill said: "Their names, as far as I have been able to get them, were Herbert Harwell, Samuel Harwell, John Edwards, John Turbefeild, Benjamin Stacy, John Abernathy, John Mayhew, and Aaron Mayhew. These all settled in the vicinity of the present Rehoboth Church." The widow Morris and her daughter, Nancy L. Morris, and her married daughter, Rebecca, and her husband, Williams Mays, first settled near the Vesuvius Iron Works, but they soon removed to the Rehoboth neighborhood.

"As they journeyed to a new home, in the spirit of true pilgrims, they were not unmindful of a better country, that is, a heavenly. Morning and evening the incense of prayer and praise ascended to God from the altar of their devotions; and occasionally an experience meeting, or love feast, was held by night in their camp. Such a meeting chanced to be held by them on the banks of the Roanoke River, when it pleased the Lord to visit and bless this pious band in a manner so remarkable that the deep forest was made vocal with their triumphant songs of joy, crying, 'Glory to God in the highest!' A planter of intelligence and wealth, attracted by the sound, came with his servants to investigate the unwonted scene. 'Friends,' said he, 'this is indeed a strange proceeding; what is the meaning of all this?' John Turbefeild, for the rest, answered in the spirit of meekness and love: 'Sir, we are all professors of religion, members of the Methodist Church, journeying to a new home; we have been engaged in our accustomed devotions; the King has come into our camp, and we have been made very happy—glory be to God!' The planter was overwhelmed by a divine influence; conviction seized

his mind, and a genuine conversion crowned his investigation of this experience meeting in the forest—the first he had ever witnessed among the Methodists. Settled in their new home, they were without a preacher until the fall of 1788, when they were visited by the Rev. Mr. Brown, a young local preacher, who came out also from Virginia to inspect the country with a view to ultimate removal. On application, liberty was readily granted him by the Rev. Mr. Miller to preach to the people in the Old Whitehaven Church. He spoke with great zeal and fervor; his words were in demonstration of the Spirit and in power; the Methodists felt the obligation to hold their peace and disguise their joyous emotions; but the widow Morris indulged in a shout on the occasion that would have done credit to one of George Shadford's revival meetings on the old Brunswick Circuit in Virginia. The congregation were panic-stricken; the old German ladies pressed their way to Nancy L. Morris, the widow's daughter, and exclaimed in the utmost fright, 'Your mother has a fit, indeed she has; and she is going to die!' The daughter, not at all alarmed, answered with surprising calmness, 'She will soon recover from them.' "

This Nancy L. Morris subsequently became the wife of Daniel Asbury, who, with the assistance of John McGee in 1789, and with Jesse Richardson in 1790, was sent to form the Lincoln Circuit. "This circuit was made to embrace not only Lincoln, but also Rutherford and Burke, with portions of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties in North Carolina and York District in South Carolina, and that part of Spartanburg and Union districts which lies

north of the Pacolet River. It took the name of Union Circuit in 1793, which was retained until 1805, when it was again called Lincoln."¹

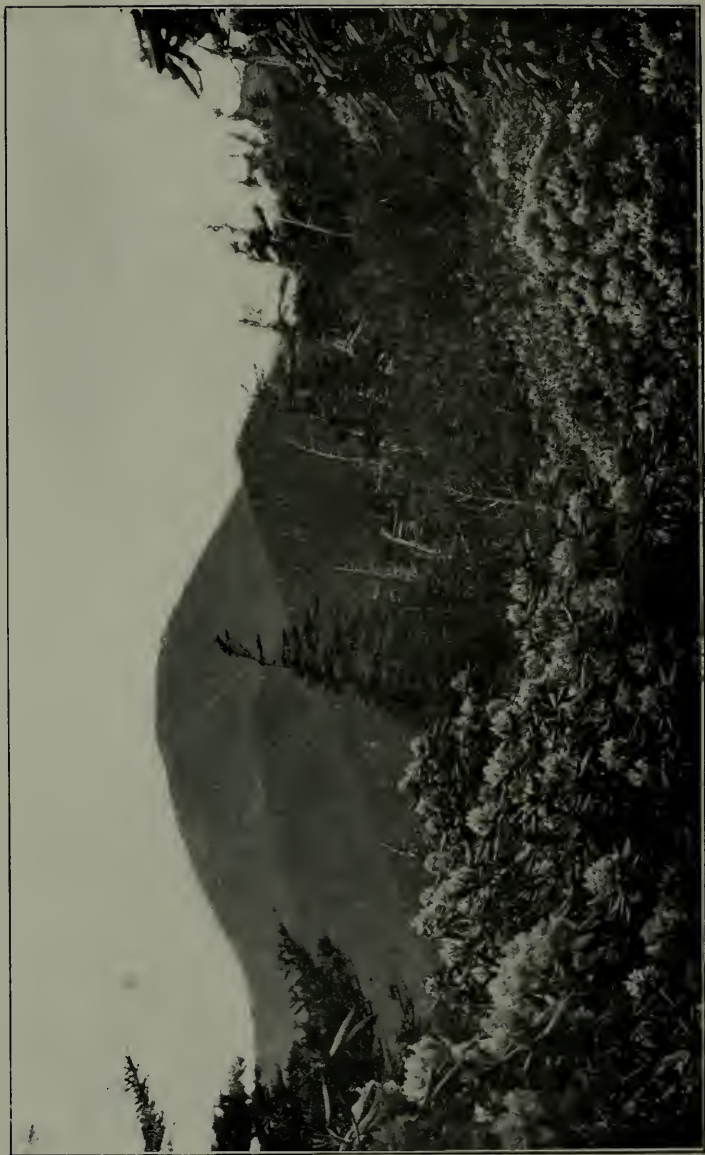
When Daniel Asbury and John McGee entered upon the work of forming the Lincoln Circuit in 1789, they went no doubt first to this colony of Methodists from Virginia, referred to in another paragraph, who settled here two years before. After Daniel Asbury married he settled in a quarter of a mile of the church,² where his family remained until his death in 1825. For two years they worshiped in the grove or in private houses. But in 1791 they erected a building which was the first Methodist church in the state west of the Catawba. It was a small log house, with a shed on one side for the colored people.³ The present building is the third erected at that place. It was erected in 1891, just one hundred years after the first one was built.

At any rate, this was in the territory that Daniel Asbury went to form into a circuit. About this time (during 1789) there was "a beardless youth," Enoch George, assisting Rev. Philip Cox on a circuit in Virginia. When Bishop Asbury came around Mr. Cox said to the bishop, "I have brought you a boy, and if you have anything for him to do, you may set him to work." The bishop looked at him earnestly for some time, but said little. The next day, however, he told the boy that he would accept his

¹Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina," page 261.

²Rev. M. V. Sherrill, Manuscript.

³Here in this house Rev. M. V. Sherrill was baptized and attended Sunday school.



MOUNT MITCHELL.

Height, 6,717 feet above sea level, highest peak east of the Rockies.

services. He then told him he might proceed to the head of the Catawba River and report himself to Daniel Asbury, who was forming a new circuit." George immediately started on his journey. The distance was three hundred miles, over a rough road, and through a strange country. As he journeyed on from day to day, he was subjected to many annoyances. People would ask him his name, residence, destination, and the object of his journey. He could get along tolerably well with all but the last question. "To inform those careless people," says he, "that I was a preacher, a Methodist preacher, a heretic and deceiver in their eyes, was to call forth frowns and persecution." When he arrived at the end of his journey he rested a few days, and then commenced his "regular round on the new-formed circuit, which embraced a vast tract of country and some of the most stupendous mountains in North America." He soon found that he had no easy place. "He had to climb mountains, descend valleys, swim rivers, wade through mud, and find his way through pathless forests. He had to preach to a people confirmed in the principles of Calvinism, the very hardest cases in the whole catalogue of sinners."¹ He was far away from home, had no money, and his clothes were worn out. He had to preach for nothing. In this section, at that time, to pay a Methodist preacher was never once thought of. This mountainous country under all the circumstances discouraged him, and he resolved to abandon his work if he

¹For a full description of the experiences of Enoch George, see his Autobiography, *Methodist Magazine*, Vol. XII., pages 14, 15. "Asbury and His Colaborers," Larabee, Vol. II., page 243.

could not get another circuit. He wrote to Bishop Asbury describing the difficulties under which he labored, and requested to be moved to some other circuit.

Doubtless he would have gone back to his old Virginia home, but how was he to get home? He had worn out his clothes and used up his money. He finally decided to engage in teaching school for a few months to get money enough to carry him home. But before beginning his school he met his colleague, Rev. Daniel Asbury, who pronounced a general anathema upon the whole concern. He notified the friend to whom George had intrusted the business of the school on the peril of his salvation not to encourage or aid, in any way, his leaving the circuit and retiring from the work of the gospel ministry. "Mr. Asbury, it seems, placed a much higher value on the talents and services of George than he himself, in his despondency, could entertain. The project of the school therefore being defeated, George gathered up his energies, and climbed on the rugged way over the mountains to usefulness and to eminence."

In the meantime he received a letter from Bishop Asbury, saying, "It was good for him and others to bear the yoke in their youth; that itinerant labors must be hard if properly performed; and that it was better to become inured to poverty and pain, hunger and cold, in the days of his youth, than when he was old and gray-headed the task would be easy." This advice he followed to the letter and continued on his rough circuit, in the midst of hard rides and poor fare, to "preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." "Enoch George ever after remembered the senti-

ment of Bishop Asbury, 'Itinerant labors must be hard if properly performed.'¹

In 1790 the Lincoln Circuit appears in the list of appointments, with Daniel Asbury and Jesse Richardson as pastors. The circuit had been formed, but not without enduring many hardships and much persecution. It required heroes for such undertakings. Enoch George came near surrendering, but Daniel Asbury knew something of this frontier work, and was well adapted for the work of a pioneer. He had already traveled the French Broad, in a region that was semi-barbarous. The population was scattered along the streams and in the mountain coves. It is hard for us in this age of Methodism to realize the hardships to be endured at that day by a Methodist minister. One has said he was often forced "to subsist solely on cucumbers, or a piece of cold bread, without the luxury of a bowl of milk or a cup of coffee. His ordinary diet was fried bacon and corn bread; his bed not the swinging hammock, but the clapboard laid on poles supported by rude forks driven into the earthen floor of a log cabin."

Many of the inhabitants regarded the Methodist preacher as an intruder in this land of theirs. He met hostility on every hand. Sometimes the persecution was very bitter. But such leaders as Dr. Coke, Francis Asbury, Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce, Daniel Asbury, and others, led the gathering forces forward to a glorious conquest. An incident which occurred in Rutherford county in 1789 will show something of the opposition and persecution met

¹"Heroes of Methodism," Wakely, page 145.

by the Methodist preacher. "A ruffian band, headed by one Perminter Morgan, a Baptist preacher, seized Daniel Asbury and hurried him to trial before Jonathan Hampton, a worthy justice of the peace and a gentleman of intelligence. 'What crime has been committed by Mr. Asbury,' said the just and prudent magistrate, 'that you have thus arrested him and brought him in the presence of an officer of the law?' 'He is going about everywhere through the country preaching the gospel, and has no authority whatever to do so,' responded Mr. Morgan for the rest. 'We believe he is nothing but an impostor, and we have brought him before you that you may do something with him, and forbid him to preach any more in future.' 'Why, does he make the people who go to hear him preach any worse than they were before?' further asked the magistrate. 'We do not know that he does,' answered Mr. Morgan, 'but he ought not to preach.' 'Well,' said the magistrate, 'if he makes the people no worse, the probability is he makes them better; so I will release him and let him try it again.' " Asbury no doubt left the court rejoicing that he could suffer persecutions also for Christ's sake. He asked the Conference for a location in 1791, which was granted; but he continued to labor, as circumstances would permit, with great zeal and usefulness. In 1801 he was appointed to the Yadkin Circuit, where he labored for two years with great acceptability.

Daniel Asbury, who had the same name of the bishop though no kin, was born in Fairfax county, Virginia, on February 18th, 1762. He was one of the most prominent pioneer preachers in western North Carolina. He had

just the kind of training that fitted him for the work of a pioneer. In early life he had been captured by the Indians, and had spent some years in captivity, enduring great hardships. This was a necessary part of an education for an itinerant life. He was admitted into the traveling connection in 1786, and appointed to the Amelia Circuit; 1787, Halifax; 1788, French Broad; 1803, Union Circuit; 1804, Enoree Circuit; 1805 he spent chiefly at home; from 1806 to 1810, presiding elder on the Swannanoa District; from 1810 to 1814, on the Camden District; from 1814 to 1818, on the Catawba District; from 1818 to 1822, on the Broad River District; in 1822 and 1823, he traveled the Lincoln Circuit; and in 1824, the Sugar Creek Circuit.

“His advanced age and increasing infirmities now rendered him incapable of effective service, and he took a superannuated relation. But it was not long before the Master whom he had served so long and so faithfully called him to his reward. On Sunday morning, April 15th, 1825, he arose, apparently more vigorous and cheerful than usual. He conversed on various subjects, and noted down a passage of Scripture on which he intended to preach a funeral sermon. But the moment for his ascension had now nearly come. The silver cord was loosened so gently that the transition from earth to heaven was made apparently without a pang. He was walking through his yard, when suddenly he stopped, looked up to heaven, and, with an unearthly smile, uttered indistinctly a few words, and then fell breathless on the ground. It was on the Sabbath, a fitting time for an old pilgrim to enter his Father’s house above. It was somewhat remark-

able that he was born on the Sabbath, carried off by the Indians on the Sabbath, returned to his father's house on the Sabbath, was converted on the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath went to his eternal rest."¹

His last letter, written to the Conference in Fayetteville, is most pathetic, and at the same time shows the spirit of the true itinerant, as well as the spirit of heroism. It is an inspiration to every itinerant preacher. Here it is:

DECEMBER 28th, 1824.

My Dear Brethren: These lines will inform you that I feel no abatement in my spirit and love toward you or the Church of God in which we have been united many years. You are the people, under God, who sought and found me, when I was in the path of ruin. You bore with my weakness and ignorance, and gave me a place among you; you nursed me as parents. I should be glad to be with you in Conference, and more so as I was not with you last year. I have tried to do the best I could this year. I have attended my appointments, but many times not able to preach much. The reason I think it not prudent to attend Conference is, since winter set in I have been much afflicted with a shortness of breath which is very distressing in cold weather, therefore myself and friends think I had better take some rest; and if my brethren will be so kind as to grant me a superannuated relation with you one year, and perhaps one year may determine one way or the other. And if you, my brethren, in your wisdom, should think best not to superannuate me, you may dispose of me as the Lord directs. I think there is room in the Catawba District for a missionary.

DANIEL ASBURY.

John McGee who went with Daniel Asbury in 1789 to assist in forming the Lincoln Circuit will be noticed in another chapter. Jesse Richardson, who was Asbury's colleague on the new circuit, entered the traveling connection in 1788, and was appointed to the Greenbrier Circuit

¹Sprague's Annals, Vol. VII., page 128.

in Virginia; 1789, New River; 1791, Yadkin; 1792, Cherokee; 1793, Georgetown; after which he located. He was a good preacher, well prepared for the class of work he had to do, and above all he was very successful in winning souls to Christ.

Dr. A. M. Shipp is authority for the following incidents:

"While traveling the Lincoln Circuit, he [Richardson] filled, on one occasion, his appointment for preaching on an exceedingly cold day, and afterwards rode through snow, which had fallen to the depth of eighteen inches, till about sunset, in order to reach, on the way to his next appointment, the only house where he could hope to find shelter before the darkness of night should overtake him. When he arrived at the place, he hailed the proprietor and politely asked the privilege of spending the night with him. 'No, you cannot stay,' responded he, promptly and gruffly. 'You are one of these lazy Methodist preachers, going about everywhere through the country, who ought to be engaged in honest work.' Mr. Richardson maintained his self-possession, and did not wholly despair of final accommodation, notwithstanding this rude and insulting rejection at the first. He thought the man must have some natural feelings of sympathy for the suffering which patient management and tact might evoke. His case, moreover, was one of the most pressing necessity. He therefore, after a little, renewed his request, setting forth at the same time such considerations as he thought must move the hardest heart, and concluding with an offer to reward him liberally for all the trouble and expense that

might be incurred by allowing him to pass the night under his roof. 'No,' again responded the unfeeling man in ruffian tones, 'you shall not pass the threshold of my house this night'; and quickly entering, slammed the door in the face of the man of God shivering in the cold. As the next house was twelve miles distant, and a high mountain intervened over which no open road conducted, but only a narrow path, now hidden by the snow which was beginning to fall afresh, Mr. Richardson had no alternative left him but to stay or freeze to death by the way; he therefore deliberately dismounted, tied his horse to the stake, and sat down on the door sill of the house. At length he began to sing one of the songs of Zion; the proprietor listened in profound silence, his savage nature began to grow tame, his heart softened, and he showed a disposition to engage in conversation. 'You seem to be quite merry,' said he, 'and you must be very cold, too; would you not like to have a little fire?' 'Thank you,' said the preacher; 'it is of all things what I most want just now, for I am indeed very cold.' The fire was brought; the yard contained a plentiful supply of wood, and soon there was a conflagration that made Boreas fairly tremble on his icy throne. This brought out the man of the house. 'What are you doing out there,' said he, 'burning up all my wood? Put out that fire and come into the house.' The preacher took him at his word, extinguished the fire, and entered. 'And now,' said he, 'my horse has had nothing to eat since early this morning; if you will let me put him in the stable and feed him, you shall be well paid for it.' With this request he obstinately refused to comply, with-

holding food from man and beast, as he also forbade the offering of prayer for the family before retiring. The family slept in their beds, and the preacher, wrapped in his overcoat, lay down to rest as best he could before the fire. The next morning at early dawn, hungry and cold, he threaded the uncertain pathway over the mountain to seek refreshment at the twelve-mile house.

"On one occasion Mr. Richardson lost his horse. The spirited animal, from a feeling of resentment for the supposed neglect of his owner in leaving him bound to a stake all night without food in a snowstorm, or from some other motive quite satisfactory to himself, made his escape from the stable and ran away. Mr. Richardson, going in search of him, passed by where two men were clearing land. Being wearied by his journey, he sat down on a log to rest and to make inquiry of the men concerning the route his horse might have taken. One of them abused him with great bitterness of speech, threatened to kill him, and with clenched fists struck him with such violence as to cause him to fall from his seat; and he was perhaps saved from death only by the intervention of the other man. Having found his horse, it was necessary for him, the next day, to pass by the house of the man who had assaulted him with such violence. The man's wife hailed him and requested him to stop and come in. He told her that her husband had abused him the day before and threatened to take his life, and he did not, therefore, deem it safe to comply with her request. She replied, 'My husband is at home, and says you must come in; he is very anxious to see you; there is no cause for fear.' Thus as-

sured, he went in and found the man in the deepest mental distress, and the tears streaming from his eyes. He begged the preacher most importunately to pray for him; said he, 'I feel that I am a miserable and lost sinner.' After some words of instruction and encouragement, they knelt down in prayer, and their united petitions ascended to heaven. The man was most earnestly engaged, and after a while was powerfully converted. He sprang to his feet, threw his arms around Richardson with such violence, being a man of uncommon size and strength, that he came well-nigh finishing in love the work which the day before he began in wrath. He exchanged a noble horse with Richardson, and, taking another, went with him to eight of his appointments before returning home."¹

These incidents show that the moral and religious condition of the country was anything else but desirable. The people were grossly ignorant, and what little religious belief they had was of a rigid Calvinistic form. Many of them were unwilling to listen to anything else. Nothing but a revival of great spiritual power could ever attract their attention. It was the only hope of their salvation. In 1795 they had not improved much, for during this year Bishop Asbury crossed the Pacolet River in the southwestern boundary of the Lincoln Circuit, where he makes this entry in his Journal: "My body is weak, and so is my faith for this part of the vineyard. God is my portion, saith my soul. This country improves in cultivation, wickedness, mills, and stills; a prophet of strong drink would be ac-

¹Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina," page 268.

ceptable to many of these people. I believe the Methodist preachers keep clear both by precept and example; would to God the members did so too! Lord, have pity on weeping, bleeding Zion!"

The Lincoln Circuit, however, was growing in numbers, for in 1792 four hundred and fifty-three whites and thirty-nine colored were reported. This is a very marvelous growth considering the opposition they met on every hand. For they were not only opposed by sin and Satan, but by many who called themselves Christians. This speaks volumes for the early leaders of this movement. They were not men of great learning, but they were peculiarly adapted and raised up under God for this special work to which they had been called.

Not only were these men adapted for the work, but Methodism was especially adapted to the people of this Southland. "Hence in Maryland and Virginia, in the Carolinas and Georgia, the Methodists made much greater progress, for many years, than they did in the more northern of the original thirteen states."¹ For many years, after the first Conference, nine-tenths of all the Conferences met in the South. In those early days the South gave to Methodism such men as Jesse Lee, Joshua Wells, John Easter, William Watters, Freeborn Garrettson, Edward Dromgoole, Isaac Smith, Daniel Asbury, William McKendree, and many others of like character. So that, notwithstanding the hardships and continual oppositions, these leaders of Methodism at this time (1792) had

¹"Methodism in Tennessee," McFerrin, page 132.

planted the standards of Methodism from the Smoky Mountains in the west to the Dismal Swamp and seaboard in the east. The reason Methodism was not planted in this Catawba country earlier is due to the fact that this region was just now being settled. In 1789 it was almost a pathless wilderness. But the fertile soil along these meandering streams attracted emigrants, who came and began to clear out the forest and turn them into beautiful farms. The Catawba, Cherokee, and Creek Indians were skulking about in the forest and mountain coves watching the encroachments of the "pale-face men." The new settlers often carried the rifle ready to protect themselves against the assault of wild beasts and prowling savages.

In this wild region the Methodist preacher hunted up the hardy settlers in their forest homes, and proclaimed the gospel to groups of wondering hearers. One of these zealous men appointed a woods meeting, at which the inhabitants gathered from miles around. A revival began, and a large number professed religion. Among the converts was the young John C. Ballew, who entered the traveling connection in 1803. These revivals not only added members to the Methodist Church, but were a constant feeder to other denominations.

But among all the early settlers who entertained the preachers, they found few like William Mills and his family. He settled in what is now Rutherford county as early as 1766. Bishop Asbury stopped with him, and it was the preachers' home for a number of decades. One of his daughters married a Methodist preacher, Rev. Samuel Edney. We have no account that Mr. Mills ever joined

the Church, but his wife was a faithful member of the Methodist Church for fifty years. They had two sons and five daughters; all joined the Methodists, and gave an average of fifty years to the service. The influence of the Mills family was felt throughout that section of the state.¹ The beautiful Mills River and Mills Gap were named for William Mills.

These faithful laymen, who entertained these early Methodist preachers and encouraged them in their work, deserve to be fixed in our memories. In this section of the state no one can tell how much Methodism owes to such men as Mills, Connelly, Harper, White, Moore, Davenport, Fitzgerald, Henly, and many others. The preachers could not have done much if it had not been for such men as these, who not only furnished the material aid, but met the class and kept the work moving on in the absence of the pastor.

¹Bennett's "Chronology of North Carolina," page 21.

CHAPTER XVII.

WEST OF THE BLUE RIDGE, 1780 TO 1805.

Methodism Crossed the Blue Ridge. Jeremiah Lambert. Work of Local Preachers. Holston Circuit Divided, and Nollichucky Formed. Samuel Edney. Early Preaching Places. Swannanoa Circuit—Methodism Making Progress. Josiah Askew. Benjamin Mathews. Thomas Mann—His Journal. Nathan Jarratt. In 1800 Morganton is Attached to Swannanoa. Josiah Philips. Moses Floyd. James Jenkins Passes Through the Swannanoa Circuit—Bishop Asbury Within the Bounds of the Circuit. At Daniel Killian's. Joab Watson. Bishop Asbury Lost in the Mountains—In a Dark Night and Thunderstorm—Finds a Mountain Cabin—New Preaching Place—Large Congregation.

It is thought by some good authorities that the preachers on the North Carolina Circuit in 1776 crossed the Blue Ridge and planted Methodism in that section. It is safe to say that at least as early as 1780 Andrew Yeargan, while on the Yadkin Circuit, made his way west of the Ridge, and took a large territory into his circuit. In 1783 the Holston Circuit was formed, and Jeremiah Lambert was appointed preacher in charge. This circuit evidently embraced a portion of North Carolina. The year before (1782) the Yadkin and Pittsylvania circuits were reported together, embracing all the territory west of where Winston-Salem now is, and having a membership of 491. In 1783 Yadkin reported 348, Pittsylvania 362; and in addition to these, two new circuits were formed—Salisbury with 30 members, and Holston with 60. The boundary line between Yadkin and Holston is not known, but no

doubt Holston embraced a part of North Carolina. Jeremiah Lambert began with sixty members. Evidently most of these were taken in by preachers on the Yadkin and Pittsylvania circuits, while no doubt some of this work was done by faithful local preachers. The Church can never pay its debt of gratitude to these men of God who were all pioneers in the early days of Methodism. Dr. McAnally, in the "Life of William Patton," says: "It has been for many years past part of the writer's work to collect reliable information as to the origin and progress of the Church of his choice in the great western and southwestern sections of our common country; and he has found that in four cases out of five, if not, indeed, in nine cases out of ten, where Methodism was first introduced into a particular section of any considerable extent, it was through the instrumentality of local preachers."

No one at the present time can rightly conceive of the amount of work they did, and all without compensation. The reader has noticed the great number of locations; these all went into the local ranks, and most of them continued to preach. Some of them would work at night in order to make up the time necessary to meet appointments in the day. The Church may be able to get along at this day without local preachers; but the local ministry has been largely instrumental in making Methodism what it is. These local preachers pioneered the way, felled the trees, broke up the fallow ground, planted the seeds, and now we are gathering their crop. On one occasion, in an Annual Conference, Bishop Asbury said, "Brethren, our local preachers are the cream of our Church."

This reference is somewhat a digression from the thread of our story. At the close of the year of Lambert's pastorate on the Holston Circuit, he reported seventy-six members, a gain of sixteen. He was followed on Holston by such men as Henry Willis, 1784; Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert, 1785; Mark Whitaker and Mark Moore, 1786; Jeremiah Mastin and Nathaniel Moore, 1787. In 1787 the Holston Circuit was divided into Holston and Nollichucky circuits, and the two formed a district, with John Tunnell as presiding elder.

Most of North Carolina west of the Blue Ridge, except the northwestern corner, was in the Yadkin Circuit until the Lincoln Circuit was established in 1790, with Daniel Asbury and Jesse Richardson as its preachers. The reader is already familiar with their work in this mountain country. Under the leadership of such pioneers, the work prospered so that in 1793 the Lincoln Circuit was divided, forming Union and Swannanoa. Samuel Edney was appointed to the Swannanoa in 1793, and while on this circuit he married Eleanor Mills, who was a daughter of William Mills. He settled on Green River, in what is now Rutherford county. After his location in 1796, he settled in what is now Henderson county at a point afterwards called Edneyville.¹ In this country he wielded a wonderful influence for Christ and the Church. No man did more for Methodism west of the Ridge than Samuel Edney. On his land was conducted a camp meeting which is said to be the first west of the Blue Ridge. His house became

¹"Holston Methodism," by Price, page 229.



SWANNANOA RIVER.

the regular stopping place for Methodist preachers. Among the first Methodist preaching places in Buncombe were Beaver Dam (Killian's), Salem Camp Ground (Weaverville), Asheville, and later Newton Academy in the suburbs of Asheville, and Turkey Creek Camp Ground. Newton Academy was a classical school, and the first school of any note in western Carolina. It was run by the Presbyterians. Rev. George Newton was the principal, and he was very friendly to the Methodists, and they frequently preached in the academy. Mr. Newton was the first Presbyterian preacher to settle west of the Blue Ridge.

The Swannanoa Circuit takes its name from the beautiful of Swannanoa¹ River that rises near the top of Grey Beard, one of the high peaks of the Blue Ridge, and flows by Montreat as an ideal mountain stream, continuing westward until it empties into the French Broad near Asheville. It was afterwards called the Black Mountain Circuit.

During several months in 1794 the Swannanoa Circuit was without a preacher, as one of the preachers got married and the other was sick. This being the case, Bishop Asbury found Philip Sands, near the headwaters of Dan

¹Many theories have been advanced as to the origin and meaning of the name Swannanoa. Some say the word in Cherokee means beautiful, and others say that it is an imitation of the sound made by the raven's wings when flying rapidly, because of the great number which congregated on the banks of this river in the days when their country was inhabited by the Indians. But Mr. S. A. Sondley says that it is more probable that it was another way of spelling Shawano, a name which belonged to a family of Indians.

River in Stokes county, who volunteered to go to the Swannanoa Circuit. He was then on the Guilford Circuit, but set out at once for Swannanoa. Asbury, in speaking of making this change, says: "Now because I have power to send a preacher to these poor people, some are pleased to account me and call me a despot."² Others had failed to catch the true spirit of the itinerancy to the same extent Bishop Asbury had realized it. The early Methodists had the missionary spirit of going and evangelizing.

It seems there were early difficulties on the circuit, but two years after its formation it had a membership of 236. And in 1795 Abner Henly and Leonard Dyson were sent to the Swannanoa. Henly was admitted on trial in 1791, and gave two years to the South Carolina Conference; the remainder of his itinerant labors were devoted to North Carolina. He located in 1796, but was appointed to Salisbury in 1800. Leonard Dyson was admitted in 1793, and located in 1796.

In 1796 the circuit was blessed with men who were above the ordinary, William Wilkerson and John Sale. The reader has already been introduced to these men in another chapter. The circuit also had a strong man as presiding elder, Rev. Josiah Askew. He was admitted in 1788 and located in 1798. During his itinerancy, he traveled in North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina. His first circuit was Halifax; the next, Salisbury; the next, Santee; the next, Bertie; the next, Sussex; the next, Richmond and Manchester; the next, Brunswick. After this

²Asbury's Journal, Vol. II., page 225.

he was presiding elder until he located. In 1795 he was appointed presiding elder of a district embracing the Swannanoa Circuit. He was born in Burke county, North Carolina. He was a young man of ability. Travis, in speaking of him, says: "His praise was in all the churches, where he was known as a gifted preacher, a zealous, humble, and holy Christian, doing much good wherever he labored."¹

"The Askews on Spring Creek, Buncombe (now Madison) county, North Carolina, were relatives of his. Of these the Rev. James Askew was for a long while a local preacher, was a man of great piety, and was above mediocrity for pulpit eloquence. I knew him in 1850-51, and in subsequent years. He lived to an advanced age, and left to the Church the heritage of a number of children, who became useful citizens."²

Benjamin Mathews was on the Swannanoa in 1797. He was admitted in 1795 and traveled until 1803, when for some reason he located. Thomas Mann was appointed to Swannanoa in 1798. He was admitted into the Conference in 1793, and traveled in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. He was born in Amherst county, Virginia, April 1st, 1769, and joined the Church in his nineteenth year. He gave nearly all of his ministerial life to the itinerancy. During a great part of his itinerant life he kept a diary,³ from which we gather many interesting

¹"Life of Travis," page 195.

²"Holston Methodism," Price, page 283.

³There are thirteen volumes of this diary in the writer's possession. The leaves are yellow with age, and much of it is hard to decipher. It begins about 1798, and covers most of the period from

facts. He traveled almost incessantly, and preached with much earnestness and plainness of speech. He was a man of great spiritual power, and thoroughly consecrated to his work. During the time he was on the Swannanoa Circuit he endured many hardships and privations.

No one at the present can realize what it meant to be an itinerant Methodist preacher in western North Carolina a little over a hundred years ago. Thomas Mann speaks often of the Littlejohns, Harpers, Whites, Wakefields, Davenports, Porters, Dickeys, Hensons, and Kilians. He preached at the houses of these, and at many others. Morganton was another place in his round. He mentions several other preachers who preached in the bounds of the circuit during the year. He refers to brother Mansfield who was presiding elder on the district, and to the fact of hearing Hancock, Bird, and Henly preach from time to time. On one occasion he speaks of being in company with brother Hancock, when they saw some Indians who "appeared to be sedate," and he and brother Hancock talked and prayed with them. On another occasion he speaks of riding a long way through the snow to an appointment, and on reaching the meeting-house he found no one present. He makes this statement on the last day of 1798: "This day ends the year. How many changing scenes I have passed through! Much distress of body and mind. And how little I have

then until 1827. Much of it is religious experience. Its historical value is lessened by a great many abbreviations. But with all these imperfections, it throws a great deal of light on the period covered. For the use of this manuscript we are indebted to Rev. C. A. Wood.

done for God! How little good done in his cause! O God, pardon whatever thou hast seen amiss in me, for thy name's sake!" And on January 1st, 1779, he prays again in these words: "Oh, may I live nearer God this year than ever!" From reading these old faded pages, we judge that as he rode over these mountains he lived continually in an atmosphere of prayer.

He was on the effective list, with the exception of a short while, until 1830, when he was placed on the superannuate list. And "on the evening of the 22d of June he retired to his chamber in as good health, apparently, as he had been for some time. Early in the night a nephew lying in the same room was awakened by an unusual noise, as though his uncle were strangling. He hastened to his relief and raised him up in his arms, but his spirit was departing and in a moment was gone. Thus died Thomas Mann, in the sixty-second year of his age, thirty-five of which were spent in the work of the ministry. As a Christian he was deeply pious: for many years he had professed sanctification, and to believers he was truly an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. As a minister he was sound in doctrine, plain, experimental, and practical in preaching, and generally useful and well received where he labored. As a companion he was easy in his manners, communicative and edifying in conversation, sober without sadness, and cheerful without levity. But his work is done; his race is ended; and he is gone, we have no doubt, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."¹

¹Minutes, Vol. II., page 118.

Nathan Jarratt followed Mann on the Swannanoa Circuit in 1799. The circuit was established in 1793 with seventy members. At the end of two years it had 236 members; and in 1799 a membership of 281 was reported. The strength of a circuit was often reduced by the formation of other circuits, and perhaps Swannanoa lost some in this way; but it must be remembered that the country was sparsely settled and the inhabitants few. Emigrants from the east did not often stop in the mountains of western North Carolina, but continued until they reached East Tennessee or the fertile fields of the Mississippi Valley. Many at that day went from Virginia and eastern Carolina to Kentucky, and Methodism there to-day owes much to North Carolina.

Nathan Jarratt has been mentioned in another chapter, but we give the following summary of his work as found in the minutes of 1804: "Nathan Jarratt, a native of North Carolina. He was admitted into the traveling connection in 1799, and departed triumphant in the faith of the gospel the 28th of October, 1803, by a short illness with an inflammatory bilious fever, in New Kent county, state of Virginia. He was a man of great zeal and a pleasing voice, affable in his manners and greatly beloved by all who had any acquaintance with him. He traveled extensively for the time he was in the connection; in North Carolina, in Swannanoa, Goshen, Newbern, Wilmington, and Bertie circuits; in Virginia, in Bedford, Williamsburg, and Hanover circuits. In him the Virginia Conference has lost a worthy member and the Church a faithful servant. He was between twenty-five and thirty

years of age. The loss of this servant of God was justly lamented by the Conference and by all his acquaintance; but the will of the Lord is done, which demands our submission, believing he is taken from the Church militant to the Church triumphant. "The night before he departed, after lying in an apparent state of insensibility for some time, he broke out in a rapture of joy, and sang the following lines:

Arise and shine, O Zion fair,
Behold thy light is come;
The glorious conquering King is nigh,
To take his exiles home.

And then in a few moments he sweetly slept in Jesus."

In 1800 the circuit was called Morganton and Swannanoa, with Josiah Philips and Samuel Ansley as its preachers. Philips was admitted in 1798, and served the following charges in North Carolina; 1800, Morganton and Swannanoa; 1801, Guilford; 1803, Mattamuskeet; 1804, Haw River; 1805, Trent; 1806, Salisbury; 1810, Yadkin; 1812, Roanoke; and served seven years in the state of Virginia, thus giving fifteen years in the itinerant ministry. He located in 1813. Samuel Ansley was admitted in 1791, and traveled in North Carolina and Virginia until 1810, when he located. Here are two men who gave an unusual length of service to the itinerancy without a break.

In 1801 Morganton was left off, and the circuit appears as Swannanoa again. Moses Floyd was appointed pastor; he was admitted on trial in 1800, and located in 1804. He served the following charges: Swannanoa, Green, and Natchez. Tobias Gibson was his colleague on the Natchez.

Here the people soon "learned to esteem Mr. Floyd as a refined and courtly gentleman, as well as a pious, zealous, intelligent, and useful minister of the gospel; but in no sense could they consider him the equal of their beloved Gibson." "Mr. Floyd was a young man of medium size, rather spare, with fair complexion, high forehead, mild and benevolent countenance, soft and agreeable manners, rather feeble voice in preaching; but his style of delivery was pleasant, and his sermons were clear, logical, and scriptural. The writer never saw him the least boisterous in the pulpit, though there was often so much earnestness and sympathy in his pulpit labors that the people were constrained to feel that he was deeply interested in their salvation. The burden of the work, of course, fell mainly on him, and his habitual pale face and failing strength soon told that the burden was more than he could long bear."

During his pastorate on the Natchez charge he formed an attachment for a Miss Griffing, who was beautiful and deeply pious, "and in every way worthy of being a preacher's wife." But because Mr. Floyd was in feeble health her parents objected to the marriage. This, however, did not stop them. Miss Griffing was of age, and the couple were married. There was no elopement. The Discipline at that day had a section on "Unlawful Marriages," and according to the rule it would have been legitimate for any Christian to have married her under the circumstances, but the Discipline makes an exception of a Methodist preacher. When there is objection, it says "a Methodist preacher ought not to be married to her."¹

¹Discipline, ninth edition, 1797, page 54.

Mr. Floyd looked upon this rule as advisory, and not taught by the word of God, and so felt that he had done no harm. The enemy took advantage of this, and the standard of the ministry was lowered in that section. Floyd was suspended from the ministry for a short time. His character was passed at the next session of the Conference, and he was granted a location. Afterwards he studied and practiced medicine, and continued his duties as a local preacher. He maintained his Christian character to the end of his career. He located to make a living for his family, but was not very successful even in that. He died poor, and left a widow in poverty. He died of measles in 1814.

While Mr. Floyd was on the Swannanoa Circuit, Rev. James Jenkins passed through that section and spent some time at Hot Springs. He was presiding elder on a district which embraced Cherokee Circuit, and at the quarterly meeting for this circuit, which was near the Blue Ridge, Mr. Floyd met him and conducted him across the mountain. Jenkins preached several times on the way, "and on one occasion," he says, "at a night meeting near Buncombe Courthouse, the sanctifying grace of God was present during the first prayer; at which time a sister experienced this important blessing. I heard from her the next fall, through Bishop Asbury, and she was still happy."¹

In speaking of the springs, he says: "A few cabins had been prepared here for invalids; one of which was occupied by a brother from Georgia, with whom I boarded. I

¹"Life of James Jenkins," page 106.

found here quite a mixed multitude from Georgia and the Carolinas, among whom were a Presbyterian and a Baptist minister. These people amused themselves at foot racing and cards; for which I reproved them in public and private. I preached once; they paid good attention. After spending ten days among them, having received considerable benefit from the water, I left for my regular work. On my return I filled several appointments I had made on my way up. I preached once at brother Mills's, and spent the night at brother Edney's, whose wife, a long time serious, obtained religion while we were at family worship."¹

In November, 1800, Bishop Asbury spent some time in western North Carolina. November 8th, he says: "We came to Thomas Foster's,² and held a small meeting at his house. We must bid farewell to the chaise; this mode of conveyance by no means suits the roads in this wilderness; we are obliged to keep one behind the carriage with a strap to hold by and prevent accidents almost continually. I have health and hard labor, and a constant sense of the favor of God.

"Tobias Gibson had given notice to some of my being

¹"Life of Jenkins," page 107.

²Thomas Foster lived on the southern side of the Swannanoa River, about two and one-half miles south of Asheville, on the old Rutherfordton road. He built the first bridge across the Swannanoa. He was a member of the Legislature from Buncombe. He was a man of prominence, and accumulated considerable wealth. Mr. Foster often entertained Bishop Asbury. He did not claim to be a Christian, yet he had a daughter, Mrs. James M. Alexander, who became a stanch Methodist. He lived to a ripe old age, and is buried at Newton Academy graveyard in the suburbs of Asheville.



KILLIAN HOUSE.

at Buncombe Courthouse, and the society at Killian's, in consequence of this, made an appointment for me on Sunday, 11th. We were strongly importuned to stay, which brother Whatcoat felt inclined to do. In the meantime we had our horses shod by Philip Smith; this man, as is not infrequently the case in this country, makes wagons and works at carpentry, makes shoes for men and for horses; to which he adds, occasionally, the manufacture of saddles and hats."

Mr. Charles M. Killian writes a letter to Dr. R. N. Price, dated October 29th, 1902, in which he says: "I am a direct descendant of Daniel Killian to whom you refer; and may also add that, as far as my knowledge extends, I am the only living grandson of the said Daniel Killian, who was the friend and host of the venerated Bishop Asbury in his travels through this then wilderness in the early days of Methodism. The house which was the home of my grandfather, and where the bishop made his home, was torn down something over a year ago by Captain I. V. Baird, the present owner of the old homestead, and a large modern house was erected. The old chimney remained standing up to a few days since, but has been taken away. Captain Baird, with the logs that were not too much decayed, built a tenant house on another part of the estate. The photo of the original house was taken about two years since under the direction of Bishop Fitzgerald."¹

While in this section, the bishop visited George Swain's "agreeable family." George Swain was the father of

¹"Methodism in Holston," page 303.

David L. Swain, who was for many years president of the university, and at one time Governor of North Carolina. The bishop again visited this territory in 1803, and intimates an improvement in the roads; and speaks of passing two large camp meeting grounds.

In 1802 Thomas L. Douglass was on the Swannanoa Circuit, and James Douthet was presiding elder. On May the 1st and 2d, at a quarterly meeting, James Douthet says, "it was a solemn time; thought by some to be the greatest meeting ever held in Buncombe county." Mr. Newton, a Presbyterian, attended and assisted in the administration of the word and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. At this time the revival fires were burning all the way from the Blue Ridge to the sea.

Joab Watson followed Douglass on the circuit. He was admitted in 1801, and located in 1806. And James Taylor, who served Swannanoa in 1804, was admitted in 1803, and discontinued in 1805. The circuit did not have a rapid growth so far as numbers are concerned; for in 1805 there were only 311 members in the bounds of this large circuit.

There is an article in the "Heroes of Methodism," taken from the *Southwest Virginian*, that gives such a vivid description of Bishop Asbury's experience in that mountain district, that we introduce it here:

"Soon after Mr. Asbury was elected bishop, he had occasion to cross the Blue Ridge from the western part of North Carolina to Tennessee. Nearly one whole day was spent in wandering among the ravines in the neighborhood of the mountain, and several times in the course

of the day he found himself completely bewildered. His intention was to reach a cottage near the top of the mountain, where men of his own order were wont to resort; but the shadow of the mountain, as it lengthened over the vale, proclaimed the close of day, and admonished him that he must seek for entertainment among strangers, or else consent to spend the night in the deep and lonely recesses of a strange forest.

“In vain he looked out for a cottage where he might spend the night. No opening field appeared—no curling smoke ascended—no woodman’s ax resounded—all was silent and solitary! He pressed his jaded pony, but night soon spread its sable curtains around him. About this time the night owl set up a hideous scream, which almost caused the bishop’s hair to stand erect. To this responded the dismal howling of wolves in every direction, which so wrought upon his apprehensions that he easily imagined them standing upon every rock that overlooked his road; and, to heighten the horror of the scene, he distinctly heard at a short distance from the road the shrieks of a panther, which thrilled through his whole soul. Again he urged on his pony; but the whip only extorted a heavy and jaded trot. As he cast his eyes around him everything seemed to have put on the aspect of woe, and every sound inspired melancholy. The roaring of the distant waterfall, the rippling of the small rill as its sportive waters leaped from rock to rock, the cry of the whipporwill, and the sighing of the evening breeze, all contributed to deepen the gloom in which his mind was already involved. He often looked to the right hand and to the left, hoping that

some cottage fire might arrest his eye; but all was a dense forest.

“As he slowly ascended from one of the deep ravines, he fancied he saw in the distance a light from some dwelling; but it only blazed for a moment, and then disappeared. A moment after, one solid column of fire seemed to gush as from the crater of some volcano, widening as it sped its way through the apparently cloudless sky, and blazing in fearful grandeur around the tall peaks of the mountain. This was succeeded by one long, loud, and deafening peal of thunder, which convinced the bishop that a dreadful thunderstorm was close at hand. For an hour the storm raged fearfully. The oft-reiterated peals of thunder, as they broke in angry tones from the clouds, and reverberated among the hills, the lurid coruscations of the lightning, the torrents of rain that fell, with the bending and breaking of many a sturdy tree, made it one of the most fearful scenes the bishop had ever witnessed. But the storm passed by, and through the mercy of God he was yet spared, and pursued his course.

“But he had not proceeded far when suddenly his pony halted, pricked up his ears, and stood still. ‘Mercy!’ ejaculated the bishop, ‘what now?’ He applied his whip; but his horse was not to be moved. He attempted to turn him round (for manly courage now gave way to the wildest apprehensions), but the beast stood as if bound by a spell of enchantment. For a moment the bishop was held in fearful suspense, and then a noise was heard near by, at which the affrighted horse wheeled round and bounded off with the agility of a buck, leaving the bishop flat in the

middle of the road. But the worst was now over; for he distinctly heard human voices, to which he hastily called, and received a friendly answer. They proved to be those of two young men who had been hunting in the course of the day and had wandered far from home. They had killed a deer, which they were carrying home. Wearied with their load, they had lain down to rest. At first they rudely laughed at the bishop's manifest excitement; but finding his horse had left him, they evinced sympathy, and assisted to catch him. He asked permission to go home with them, which was granted. It was not long before they reached the end of their journey. It was a little log hut buried in the recess of the mountains, and on every side stood huge battlements of rocks. A rail pen secured his horse till morning. The old people were found to be plain and simple-hearted. A very rough supper was procured, on which the bishop hastily regaled himself. After supper he proposed that they should have prayers. All was still as the house of death. He took out his pocket Bible, from which he read a chapter aloud; and then, kneeling down, offered a devout prayer, in which he ardently petitioned for the welfare of the family, etc. During the prayer the old man stood back at the door, with a little urchin on each side holding fast to his clothes; the old dame stood close up in the corner of the great wooden chimney, with two little ones, one in her arms, and the other by the hand. The other children all ran under the bed; and the two young men who had conducted him to the house both left, and were not seen again until morning. The next morning the bishop

proposed preaching there soon, as there were no churches in that part of the country. Silence gave consent; so he appointed a day, and then pursued his journey.

"The day for preaching arrived; the bishop appeared, when lo! the mountain land seemed to have poured forth all its sturdy population to witness the truly novel circumstance of a bishop preaching at the house of old Mr. Jenkins. Ere he got within a mile of the place he heard the sharp cracking of rifles, the sound of the huntsman's horn, the occasional cry of the hounds, and hearty laughter from many a sturdy mountainer. Suffice it to say that during service they were still; the word was not without effect. To cut the matter short, in less than twelve months a Methodist church was organized in that place, including all of Mr. Jenkins's family."¹

This gives an insight into the life of the people, and the travels, dangers, and hardships of the pioneers. With Asbury to lead, the circuit preachers went everywhere. With true apostolic zeal they pressed into "the regions beyond." The spirit that was expressed in the statement made by John Wesley, "the world is my parish," was in them and dominated their lives. "And urged by an impulse supreme over love of home, ease, or comfort, they literally went everywhere preaching the gospel." They were not moved by ambition or money, but the love of Christ constrained them. The gospel had been committed to them as a sacred trust, and the circuit preachers of early Methodism had a conviction that "woe is me if I preach

¹"Heroes of Methodism," page 45.

not the gospel." This voice from within drowned the hardships, labors, and sacrifices incident to the lives of the itinerants of that day. The greatest distinction that could come to them was to die at the post of duty on the field of battle. "No cross, no crown," was their motto. "These are they 'of whom the world was not worthy.' " They are now before the throne of God. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PERIOD OF REVIVALS.

The Meaning of Methodism—A Revival Essential to Growth. Condition of the Church—Spiritual Condition Low—Skepticism Fashionable. New Pentecost—Originated Among the Methodists—Bishop Asbury the Leader—Young Men with Apostolic Spirit Assisted—Many Results Followed—Skepticism Gave Way. Religious Experience. Doctrines Preached. Convictions Pungent. Bodily Exercises—The “Jerks”—Dr. Buckley’s Explanation—Jacob Young Gave Some Instances.

WE come now to consider one of the most vital parts of Methodism. After going back to the sources of Methodist history, if we were asked to give a definition of Methodism in one short sentence, we would say, *It is a revival of religion*. In the word “revival” is found its full significance. Methodism did not originate because of any dissatisfaction with the form of Church government. Neither was it born in some dogmatic belief. It formed no new article of faith. Hence it was not a revolution against any law, ecclesiastical authority, or doctrine. But it was a vital, innate force, that could not find expression in any organization of that day. Methodism, therefore, grew out of the necessity of the case.

If we look at the Church through all of its long history, we will find that it has had its times of declension and “times of refreshing.” The revival of spiritual life is not an accident. It is based upon the law that “all life ebbs and flows.” We know this is true in vegetable life, when we look at the flower at springtime, and then see the fad-

ing tints in autumn. It is true with animal life, and of intellectual life. And why should not this same law apply to man's higher life—his religious or spiritual? By investigation you will find that here the law is most clearly demonstrated, for here it reaches its preëminence. It is essential to the growth of the kingdom of God. A revival of religion is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not in the power of man to manipulate a revival into existence. The "times of refreshing are from the presence of the Lord."

One extreme generally follows another. In the period that we are about to consider, the pendulum seems to swing far out on the side of spiritual Christianity. The Church had come through a long period of formalism. The spirit of religion was low. The attention of the people for some years had been turned toward the war with England, and during that conflict everything was demoralized. Since their independence had been declared, much thought had been given to political power, etc. Skepticism was fashionable. Among the educated many were proud of their "free thought." The influence of Tom Paine and Voltaire had spread its dark cloud over the New World.

But near the close of the eighteenth century the pendulum seemed to swing back, and God manifested himself to the Church in a power no less great than on the day of Pentecost. Scenes and phenomena were witnessed that made men quake and tremble. And from that day to the present, French infidelity has been on the decline. In this chapter it is our purpose to follow this revival fire as it

swept over North Carolina in its awakening and saving power. To some extent we will notice the result on other Churches. It is true some denominations did not endorse it, and would have nothing to do with it, yet they no doubt received benefit from it. Among other Churches, the denominational lines almost faded out under this greater light of spiritual life.

By some writers the Methodists are almost ignored as instruments in the great revival that swept over North Carolina near the close of the eighteenth century. These historians confine it almost solely to the Presbyterian Church; but any one who will investigate the subject will find that it originated in the Methodist Church, and was carried on largely by its preachers. It is true that the Presbyterians, or at least some of them, joined in the movement,—Presbyterians and Methodists frequently working together. But these great revival meetings were unknown in North Carolina until the fire began to burn in the "Old Brunswick Circuit" in Virginia, under the preaching of the Methodists. This was as early as 1774 and 1775. When the Methodist preacher came to North Carolina, he brought the revival fire; and from that day on the "ebb and flow" of spiritual life could be seen.

Bishop Asbury was the leader in this revival movement. His zeal was only limited by his physical strength. Around him was a ministry composed mostly of young men of apostolic spirit and character, who counted not their lives dear unto them. They were willing to face the scorn of men and the opposition of demons that they might win souls for Christ. They were soon tested in the

fires of opposition and persecution, and found to be men of God, who were "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." These men threw themselves against the deism of England and the skepticism of France that were beginning to put in their destructive work upon these western shores. So in this great revival period it was war between formalism and spiritual Christianity; between creed and a religious experience; between a genuine saving faith and skepticism. And when this wave of spiritual life rolled over this country, it left thousands of souls with an experience as clear as the noonday sun; and as the darkness of the night is driven back by the morning sun, so all doubt and skepticism faded away under the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

The doctrines preached were thoroughly Methodistic. Free salvation, full salvation, present salvation; justification by faith; the regeneration of the heart by the Holy Ghost; the knowledge of sins forgiven, or the witness of the Holy Spirit that the believer is born of God; the joy of religion which is the fruit of the Spirit; and that now is the day of salvation;—these doctrines had been preached by the Methodists from the time they first entered North Carolina. Rev. James McGready (Presbyterian), giving an account of this great revival wave, says: "Party doctrines are laid aside, and nothing is heard from the pulpit but the practical and experimental doctrines of the gospel." Experimental religion was the great theme of the Methodist preacher at that day. The revival was not confined to any one Church. The Presbyterians and

Methodists labored together in harmony and rejoiced together in their success.

Another striking thing about this revival was that the convictions were pungent and powerful. And with such a deep conviction, the conversion was clear and bright. There was a camp meeting held in June, 1802, at the Jersey settlement in what is now Davidson county. At least three thousand persons attended, with about three hundred professions. Samuel McCorkle describes the conviction of an old woman who had been mocking the mourners on Monday all day. Late in the afternoon she fell in a state of horror and despair, and in this state she continued with intervals for three hours. Mr. McCorkle says: "It was impossible for my imagination to conceive of her being more tormented had she actually been in hell. She often roared out, 'O hell! thy pangs have seized me! What torments me? Hell can't be worse. Let me go there at once. It is my dreadful doom.' Two stout men were no match for her struggles. I thought of the man among the tombs with his legion. At intervals she cried, 'Oh, for mercy! But what have I to do with mercy? No mercy for poor miserable me.' Hope, however, began to prevail, and at last she shouted, 'Glory! glory!'" as long as she had wailed on account of the torment that she endured.

Men under conviction were often struck down, and not only exercised in mind and heart, but great bodily exercises often attended. The physical exercises were known as "the jerks." Rev. Barton W. Stone, a leading Presbyterian minister, described some of the phenomena that

prevailed: "The bodily agitation or exercises attending the excitement in the beginning of the nineteenth century were various and called by various names, as the 'falling exercise,' 'the jerks,' 'the dancing exercise,' 'the laughing exercise,' and so on. The 'falling exercise' was very common among all classes, the saints and sinners of every age and grade, from the philosopher to the clown. The subject of this exercise would generally, with a pious scream, fall like a log on the floor or earth, and appear as dead." And "of thousands of similar cases" he gives specimens. The "jerks" sometimes affected the whole body, sometimes a part of the body. The same writer and eyewitness continued:

"When the head alone was affected, it would be jerked backward and forward, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished. When the whole system was affected, I have seen the person stand in one place and jerk backward and forward in quick succession, the head nearly touching the floor behind and before. All classes, saints and sinners, the strong as well as the weak, were thus affected. I have inquired of those thus affected if they could not account for it, but some have told me that those were among the happiest seasons of their lives. I have seen some wicked persons thus affected, and all the time cursing 'the jerks,' while they were thrown to the earth with violence. Though so awful to behold, I do not remember that any one of the thousands I have seen thus affected ever sustained any injury in body. This was as strange as the exercise itself.

“The laughing exercise was frequent, confined solely to the religious. It was a loud, hearty laugh, but it excited laughter in none that saw it. The subject appeared rapturously solemn, and his laughter excited solemnity in saints and sinners. It was truly indescribable.

“The running exercise was nothing more than that persons, feeling something of these bodily agitations, through fear attempted to run away and thus escape from them; but it commonly happened that they ran not far before they fell, where they became so agitated that they could not proceed any further.

“I knew a young physician of a celebrated family who came some distance to a big meeting to see the strange things he had heard of. He and a young lady had sportively agreed to watch over and take care of each other if either should fall. At length the physician felt something very uncommon, and started from the congregation to run into the woods. He was discovered running as for life, but did not proceed far before he fell down, and there lay until he submitted to the Lord, and afterwards became a zealous member of the Church. Such were common.

“Thus have I given a brief account of the wonderful things that appeared in the great excitement in the beginning of the nineteenth century. That there were many eccentricities and much fanaticism in this excitement was acknowledged by its warmest advocates; indeed, it would have been a wonder if such things had not appeared in the circumstances of that time. Yet the good effects were seen and acknowledged in every neighborhood and among

the different sects. It silenced contention and promoted unity for a while."¹

Dr. J. M. Buckley is the only historian that we have seen who undertakes to account for, or explain, this strange phenomenon from a scientific standpoint. He has written much on psychology, and is a good authority on this subject. Here is what he says: "The psychological key to the problem is that concentrated attention, accompanied by strong religious emotion, produces a powerful impression upon the nervous system, the result being an agitation of the nerves throughout the body, the effects of which differ according to the constitution of the subject. In one relief is found in floods of tears, in another in hysterical laughter, in a third by unconsciousness, in a fourth by a partial loss of muscular action with marked effects upon the operations of the mind; in yet another complete catalepsy may be produced, every muscle becoming rigid, and so remaining for hours, while no impression can be made by ordinary means upon either the senses or the mind; and in still another involuntary motions may be constantly made, lasting for hours together; while some temperaments can bear religious or any other kind of emotion without outward excitement and with no indication except an unusual calmness. These differences of susceptibility are seen outside the sphere of religion, even among members of the same family."²

There is no doubt but that much of these physical exercises was due to a psychological effect. But there were

¹"Early Times in Middle Tennessee," pages 70-75.

²"History of Methodism," Buckley, Vol. 1., page 262.

some of these exercises that cannot be explained by this process. Violent opposers were sometimes seized by "the jerks"; "men with imprecations upon their lips were suddenly smitten with them." Men on horseback charging in upon a camp meeting to disperse the congregation were arrested by the strange affection at the very boundaries of the worshipping circle,—“sometimes struck from their saddles as if by a flash of lightning, and were violently shaken the more they endeavored to resist the inexplicable power.”

Dr. Buckley's explanation is perfectly satisfactory where the subject attends a religious gathering with concentrated attention and expectation, but it does not explain the phenomenon when it occurs at a time when there is no excitement and no expectation. Rev. Jacob Young in his Autobiography says: "Sometimes at hotels this affliction would visit persons, causing them, for example, in the very act of raising the glass to their lips, to jerk and throw the liquid to the ceiling, much to the merriment of some and the alarm of others. I have often seen ladies take it at the breakfast table. As they were pouring tea or coffee, they would throw the contents toward the ceiling, and sometimes break the saucer. Then, hastening from the table, their long suits of braided hair hanging down their backs would crack like a whip." Here it occurs seemingly without excitement and without expectation. It was not understood by those who witnessed it at the time, some ascribing it to the devil, others to an opposite source; some striving against it, others courting it as the power of God unto salvation. There is no doubt that God used it in accomplishing great good during this re-

vival period. Hundreds were reached who could not have been reached through any other instrumentality.

Another eyewitness says: "I saw members exercised in this way at a camp meeting held in Lincoln county. Sometimes their heads would be jerked backward and forward with such violence that it would cause them to utter involuntarily a sharp, quick sound, similar to the yelp of a dog, and the hair of the women to crack like a whip. Sometimes their arms, with clenched fists, would be jerked in alternate directions with such force as seemed sufficient almost to separate them from the body. Sometimes all their limbs would be affected, and they would be thrown into almost every imaginable position, and it was as impossible to hold them still almost as to hold a wild horse. When a woman was exercised in this way, other women would join hands around her and keep her within the circle they formed; but the men were left without constraint to jerk at large through the congregation, over benches, over logs, and even over fences. I have seen persons exercised in such a way that they would go all over the floor with a quick, dancing motion, and with such rapidity that their feet would rattle upon the floor like drumsticks."

These instances are sufficient to show the reader something concerning this strange exercise that accompanied the great revival in the early part of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PERIOD OF REVIVALS (CONTINUED).

The Quarterly Meeting—Account Given by James Douthet on the Yadkin. Swannanoa. Thomas L. Douglass. Meeting at Morganton. Guilford Circuit. James Douthet. Jonathan Jackson Writes from Roanoke. Bertie Circuit. Revivals on Newbern District. Lorenzo Dow—Creates Sensations—Extracts from His Journal. Great Excitement Prevailed. Effect of This Revival.

✓ THE quarterly meeting was a great agency for promoting revivals. In fact, the whole plan of Methodism seemed to be peculiarly adapted to bring souls to Christ. But the time of the quarterly meeting, especially when the presiding elder was a quickening and awakening preacher, was a period of transcendent interest. "The love feast, the sermons by the presiding elder and others, the exhortations, and the other services, together with the throngs in attendance, gave a striking impressiveness to such occasions."

In 1802, Rev. James Douthet was on the Salisbury District, from which he gives a glowing account of the revival work in his quarterly meetings. He says: "I am now at the quarterly meetings in the Yadkin. Brother McKendree is with us. The Lord has been powerfully present this day, and we are looking for greater times tomorrow and the next day; the Lord is doing wonders throughout the district; the holy flame has caught and is going on very considerably in all the circuits. I suppose at the several quarterly meetings, the second time I went

round the district, not less than five hundred souls professed to find the Lord."

At the quarterly meeting on the Swannanoa Circuit, the presiding elder says "it was thought by some to be the greatest meeting ever held in Buncombe county." Rev. Thomas L. Douglass was on this circuit, and was a great revivalist. He was often in demand as a preacher in the great camp meetings held at that day. He joined the Conference in 1801; traveled circuits in 1801, 1802, 1803, and 1804. In 1805 he was stationed in Portsmouth; presiding elder on the Salisbury District in 1807 and 1808. In 1813 he was stationed in Richmond. In 1814 he was transferred to the Tennessee Conference and stationed at Nashville. For many years after he left North Carolina his name was a household word.

The quarterly meeting at Morganton on the 8th and 9th of May, 1802, was attended with great interest. And on Friday, the 21st of May, we find Mr. Douthet on the Guilford Circuit, where he says the meeting continued until Monday, the 24th, and much good was accomplished. He says: "We had the greatest time and the most powerful work that I ever saw. [The work broke out on Saturday about four o'clock in the afternoon, and there was no intermission till after two o'clock in the afternoon on Monday.] I think there were during this meeting upward of a hundred souls down at one time crying for mercy; between forty and fifty professed to be converted."

At the quarterly meeting on the Caswell Circuit, Jonathan Jackson, presiding elder on the Newbern District, was present as a visitor. The Conference was held at

Edmund Taylor's. There were five conversions on Sunday, while many "others were struck to the earth and cried aloud for mercy." At Hickory Mountain, on Haw River Circuit, "we had the greatest time that had ever been seen there. [The power of the Lord came down on Saturday like a mighty rushing wind, and appeared to rest on the congregation during the meeting. The number of the converted could not be ascertained.] The work of the Lord at this time is reviving in a most pleasing manner in all the circuits in the district except Franklin. I pray God to send it there, and everywhere, till the earth is filled with the knowledge and power of God. The preachers in the district are all able to travel and preach, although some of them complain, and are greatly weakened by excessive labors." ¹

James Douthet was a native of North Carolina; his father having moved from Maryland, he settled on the Yadkin River, where he reared two boys for the Methodist ministry, James and Samuel. James entered the itinerant ministry in 1792, in a class of forty-two other young men. He traveled circuits until 1801, when he was appointed to the Salisbury District. The district embraced the following circuits: Caswell, Guilford, Yadkin, Morganton, Swannanoa, Salisbury, Haw River, and Franklin. James Douthet located in 1803.

Good news also came from the Newbern District, through its presiding elder, Rev. Jonathan Jackson. He says, in a letter written June 5th, 1802, that there was

¹Rev. James Douthet, presiding elder, in "Extracts of Letters of the Preachers," page 39.

a glorious revival in the Roanoke Circuit with many conversions and additions to the societies. The congregations were remarkable for the sparsely settled condition of the country. Mr. Jackson, speaking of a quarterly meeting at Malory's meetinghouse, says that he judged the congregation to be about fifteen hundred, and that there were few sinners who were not stricken by the power of God; while many of the saints shouted aloud the praises of the Most High. The Tar River meeting also was attended with the presence and power of the Spirit.

Jesse Lee, who was on the Norfolk District this year (1802), writes: "The work is considerably great in Bertie Circuit. There is a small revival in Portsmouth Circuit. Camden Circuit has gained a little." In 1804 Daniel Hall speaks of another revival in this part of the state. He says: "The work is going on gloriously in some parts of Bertie Circuit, and has been powerful in Amelia Circuit, and good times in Greenville and Mecklenburg circuits; and Old Brunswick has been visited with a gracious shower."¹

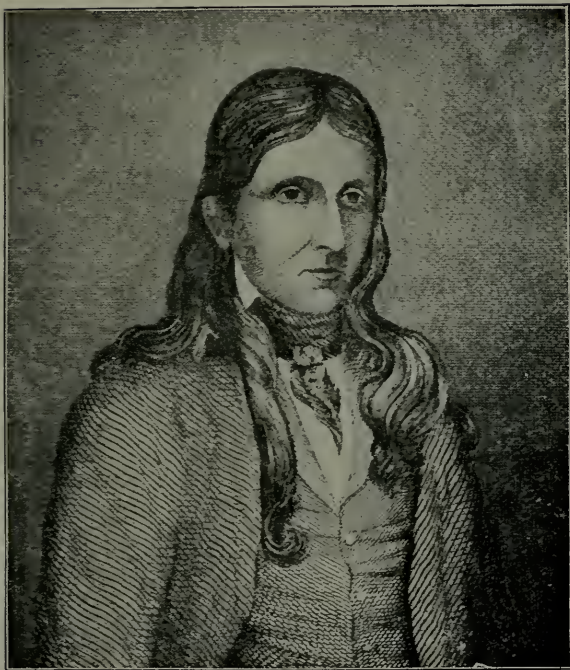
Philip Bruce, writing from the Newbern District in 1804, says: "There has been a small revival of religion near Trenton, Trent River; perhaps nearly one hundred added in that neighborhood; also some at Yelverton's Contentney. There have been some revivals in many parts of Roanoke Circuit and the upper part of Tar River Circuit, and the upper part of Tar River, especially about Snow's Church; the work goes on well, among the rich

¹"Letters of the Preachers," page 106.

and great. At a camp meeting October 23, at Ebenezer meetinghouse, twelve miles above Halifax, it was supposed we had about forty souls converted to God."

In 1806 Bishop Asbury passes through the eastern part of the state and makes this comment upon the revival that had swept over the country: "I met elder Bruce; all our talk is, What hath God wrought! In Beaufort the Lord hath put forth his power; the whole town seems disposed to bow to the scepter of the Lord Jesus, after being left and visited again, within the last twenty years, by his faithful ministers."

In glancing at this great revival, we see a strange-looking man passing through North Carolina occasionally, increasing the revival flame everywhere he went. He wears long hair, and shows at a glance that he is full of eccentricities. His name is Lorenzo Dow. He was born in Connecticut, October 16th, 1777. He began to exercise in public under the direction of Jesse Lee, and was admitted on trial, but his eccentricities were so numerous that he was not continued in the work long. However, he felt that he could not be silent, that he must call sinners to repentance, and he ceased not to preach. The time of his coming to North Carolina was favorable to his success. The whole country was under the excitement of the revival. The people were looking for greater and more wonderful displays of divine power. In the midst of all this excitement Dow appeared in North Carolina. "His appointments were usually made for three, six, or twelve months in advance, and at the day, hour of the day—nay, at the very moment—the form of the wonder-



LORENZO DOW.

ful man was seen striding through the crowd to the pulpit, or to the rude stand under the trees." Perhaps no man was ever more vividly remembered by the masses of the people than Lorenzo Dow. Tradition has brought down many of his oddities and anecdotes in almost every family.

Of course he suffered persecutions. He was in prison on one occasion, and he says, "Near Raleigh, North Carolina, a petty constable attempted to take me up as a horse thief."¹ And on the other hand he met many kind friends, who were always ready to assist him in any way possible. In 1804 he made another tour through North Carolina. He says: "We came to Wilmington, where I found religion low, and bigotry so prominent, particularly in the leading and local preachers, that had not Mr. Russell been with me, who was stationed here, I should have been shut out." He spoke at Newbern, Washington, Tarboro, Prospect, Sampson's meetinghouse, Jones's, and twice in the statehouse at Raleigh. Then he makes mention of another halt in Iredell county; thence he went to the courthouse in Buncombe county, where he spoke twice in the Presbyterian meetinghouse with good results. His horse having a sore back, he sold him at a greatly reduced price on a credit, and proceeded on foot.

When he returned to North Carolina, he spoke at "Rockingham Courthouse to fifteen or sixteen hundred people, who appeared in general solemn and well behaved, considering the inconvenience of standing in the freezing

¹Dow's Writings, page 170.

air and falling snow more than two hours." He says on the next day, "I spoke at Danville to about two thousand; this was the seat of Satan's kingdom, yet I believe I shall one day see good times in this quarter." He visited North Carolina again in 1805, when he says, "I spoke at Charlotte Courthouse, but some of A-double-L part people strove to kick up a dust."

"February 6th. Twenty-six miles in the rain to Sandy Ridge, where we had a comfortable time; thence to Salisbury, and I spoke in the air, as it was court time, but in the evening in the courthouse, from Solomon's *irony*. A man who had been careless about religion was so operated upon that God opened his heart to give me cloth for a winter coat which I greatly needed.

"8th. I spoke twice in Lexington; but a drunken man interrupted us, and when he became sober he made acknowledgment.

"9th. Rode twenty miles to Salem, and spoke to about three thousand people in the open air.

"10th. I spoke in Bethany to about three thousand; at night at Doub's, who has the most convenient room, with a pulpit and seats, of any I have seen in the south." This was the house of John Doub, father of the late Peter Doub. His house, from the time (1780) Methodism was introduced into that section of the state, was a regular preaching place on the circuit. In that class alone, Peter Doub said, there had been fourteen ministers raised up. No wonder Lorenzo Dow was highly pleased with the arrangement for service here, and no doubt he was equally

as well pleased with the kindly Christian spirit with which he was received.

On the 11th Dow spoke at "Stokes Courthouse, three thousand, a solemn time; left my mare, and procuring a horse, proceeded to Mr. M——'s; felt awfully; delivered my message as in the presence of the dread Majesty of heaven, which greatly shocked the family, considering some circumstances in the same."¹

He speaks highly of the Presbyterians in North Carolina, whose meetinghouses were generally at his service, and he was pleased with their ministers "who appeared," he says, "like pious men, with the spirit of liberty." These quotations are sufficient to show something of the man and his work. Coming at the time he did, God no doubt used him to push forward the great work of grace that was sweeping over the country.

During this revival there was much excitement, and the emotional played a very prominent part in the exercises. To some of this there was much objection, but the work went on. While this excitement was violently denounced by some, it was ardently vindicated by others. Even Bishop George, while on the Guilford Circuit in 1792, was so offended at the scenes he witnessed as to be tempted to leave his post. There were evidently peculiarities in the exercises he witnessed, which he calls "*extravagances*."

This excitement attended revivals of religion, and was largely peculiar to Methodism. Where there was no ex-

¹Writings of Dow, page 225.

citement and no emotion, there was generally no life; hence we should be slow to condemn it. "Extravagant manifestations, excessive and extreme exhibitions of feeling, are both unnatural and unscriptural; but a natural expression of inward peace and joy under proper circumstances is both scriptural and natural. When we are pleased, we smile; when we are merry, we laugh; when we are rejoiced, we shout. A shout is the consummation of a smile."¹ There can be no well-grounded objections to a man shouting over his sins forgiven, or when he has found the "pearl of great price." No one objects to the shout of the politician except his opponent. Shouting is only offensive when the thing that produces it is offensive. It cannot be unbecoming in itself; for people shout in every department of life, and there is no objection. From 1800 to 1805 there was being made in North Carolina a campaign for the salvation of souls, and they were returning to God by the score and by the hundred. Why should they not shout as they saw such demonstrations of the wonderful power of God. It would have been strange if they had not shouted.

The effect of this revival upon the Church was very marked. Methodism began in a revival, and it has had its growth in its native element. The revival period of which we are considering began about 1798, and that year there was a membership in North Carolina of 6,401 whites and 1,810 colored. And in 1805 they reported 9,727 whites and 2,163 colored, making an increase in seven

¹Sermons of Dr. N. F. Reid, page 370.

years of 3,326 white and 353 colored. This shows a large increase in the way of membership in the Methodist Church, while the increase in other Churches from the effects of these revivals was very great and gratifying. The whole Church was quickened; Methodism was more thoroughly established, and was now more fully prepared for larger and greater conquests. Its foundations had been laid with the blood of its itinerant heroes; they had suffered all kinds of persecutions, hardships, and privations. This revival wave gave them encouragement and strength for further and grander victories.

CHAPTER XX.

CAMP MEETINGS.

Origin of Camp Meetings—The Idea Suggested by Necessity—Great Revival Began in the Forest. First Camp Meeting in 1794 in Lincoln County—John McGee—Account of His Work in the West—Old Union in Randolph. One Near Statesville—Account Given by Philip Bruce. Morganton. Shepherd's Cross Roads in Iredell. Rutherford County. Scarboro's Meetinghouse in Montgomery County. Swan Creek. Presiding Elder Leading the Movement in Cape Fear. Rockingham. Howe's Conversion. How the Revival Spread. Camp Meetings in the Yadkin Valley. Jonathan Jackson Writes from the Newbern District. Great Blessing to Early Methodism.

Hail, sacred grove! Thou blest retreat!

Where, lo! the sons of God retire,

To worship in communion sweet,

And after joys divine aspire:

For thee the numbers soft shall rise,

On seraphs wing above the skies.

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Around the camp the power divine

Descends upon the saints below;

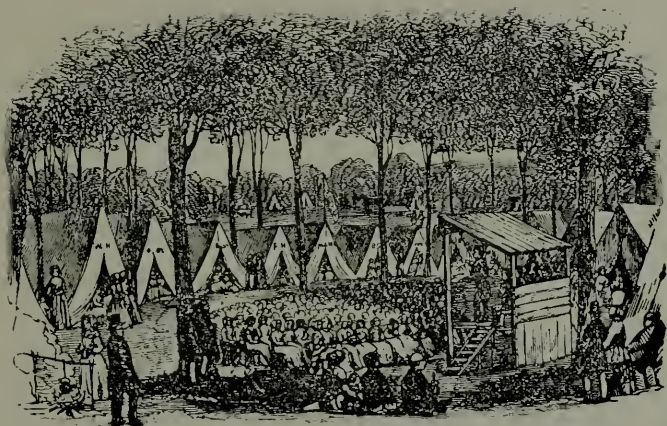
Immortal emanations shine,

The streams of life divinely flow;

The grateful tear which wets the eye

Speaks to the soul that God is nigh.

THE camp meeting originated in the great revival during the last decade of the eighteenth century; though it is commonly believed to have resulted from the great sacramental meetings held by the Presbyterians and participated in by the Methodists in Kentucky and Tennessee early in the nineteenth century. But it will be seen that this idea was carried west by Rev. John McGee, who had



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frequently attended such meetings in North Carolina years before. These gatherings, so far as we know, originated in Lincoln county about the year 1789 or 1790. Daniel Asbury and John McGee were at that time missionaries in a large territory west of the Catawba River. The country was just being settled by immigrants attracted thither by the fertility of the soil. There were no church edifices at first, so it was necessary for them to meet in groves.)

[The meetings thus held in the forest were blessed with great revivals, the people coming for many miles from the scattered settlements, camping for days and nights and participating in the religious worship. In this way the camp meeting originated out of the necessities of the time.]
It was destined to be a strong arm of Methodism.

Dr. Shipp, in his "History of Methodism in South Carolina," says: "The first Methodist church in North Carolina west of the Catawba River was built in Lincoln county in 1791, in the neighborhood in which Daniel Asbury settled when he located, and was called Rehoboth. Before the erection of this church, the congregation was accustomed to worship in the grove in the midst of which it was built, and these meetings in the forest resulted in great good, and were often continued throughout the day and night. [In 1794 the leading male members of the church consulted together and agreed to hold a camp meeting in this forest for a number of days and nights.]
The meeting was accordingly appointed, and was conducted by Daniel Asbury, William McKendree (afterwards made bishop), Nicholas Walters, and William Fulwood, who were efficiently aided by Dr. James Hall, a

celebrated pioneer preacher among the Presbyterians in Iredell county. The success of this first camp meeting, at which it was estimated that three hundred souls were converted, led to the appointment of another the following year (1795) at Bethel, about a mile from the famous Rock Spring; and subsequently of yet another by Daniel Asbury and Dr. Hall, which was known as the great Union Camp Meeting at Shepherd's Cross Roads, in Iredell county."

After camp meetings were fully developed, it came about that many a circuit would have somewhere within its bounds a camp ground, where these great annual gatherings were held. The camp ground established for the Lincoln Circuit (for it was of that region that Dr. Shipp writes) was changed in 1815 from Bethel to Robey's Church (Friendship), and in 1828 to the Rock Spring, where such meetings have been held until this day.

The name of Rev. John McGee has been associated with the origin of camp meetings in the west. McGee entered the Methodist itinerancy in 1788. He was born in Guilford county.¹ His father died while he was quite young, and his mother married a Mr. William Bell, who lived on Deep River near the road leading from Greensboro to Asheboro. His mother and stepfather possessed a great deal of property, but did not enjoy religion. Bishop As-

¹Some state that he was born near the Yadkin River, below Salisbury. He was born on Sandy Creek, in what now is Randolph county. His father was Colonel John McGee, and owned a large amount of land, a mill, and a country store. He had three children, two of them preachers—one, William, a Presbyterian, and John, a Methodist.

bury, when he visited the family in January, 1790, two years after John had entered the itinerancy, made this statement: "Went to Mr. Bell's, on Deep River, and were received in the kindest manner; before I left the house, I felt persuaded that the family would come to experience the power of religion." The bishop stopped here again in 1792, and perhaps after this. The mother of John McGee was a very remarkable woman, being "of strong mind, ardent in her temperament, and remarkably firm and resolute in whatever she undertook, which just fitted her for the trying scenes through which she was called to pass."¹ She professed religion in the great revival about the close of the eighteenth century. She died in great peace, September 9th, 1820, about eighty-five years of age.

It is said John McGee became acquainted with the Methodists on the eastern shore of Maryland, and experienced the joys of the new birth. [As we have seen, he was associated with Daniel Asbury in the work west of the Catawba in 1789, placed in charge of the Lincoln Circuit in 1792, located in 1793; but he remained in this section where camp meetings had been introduced, and became very popular, until in 1798 he removed to Sumner county, Tennessee.] His brother, William, who was a Presbyterian minister, had preceded him. While there was a difference in the doctrine of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, here in a strange land the difference was not great enough to keep them from uniting their

¹"The Old North State in 1776," second series, published 1856, page 307.

efforts for the salvation of souls. John McGee says, "We loved and prayed and preached together."

In 1799 the two brothers made a tour together, preaching at many newly settled places. It was one of the devices of the trip that John recurred to the camp meetings which he had attended in North Carolina. He adopted the idea, and it became popular. It exactly suited the new western country. Its novelty helped to recommend it; and soon it was widely established. John McGee, in giving an account of one of these meetings, says: "Preaching commenced, and the people prayed, and the power of God attended. There was a great cry for mercy. The nights were truly awful; the camp ground was well illuminated; the people were differently exercised all over the ground, some exhorting, some shouting, some praying, and some crying for mercy, while others lay as dead men on the ground. Some of the spiritually wounded fled to the woods, and their groans could be heard all through the surrounding groves, as the groans of dying men. From thence many came into the camp, rejoicing and praising God."

Dr. Foote, in his "Sketches of North Carolina," describes a meeting held at Hawfield's in October, 1801, in Mr. Paisley's charge (Presbyterian), that he claims was the first camp meeting in North Carolina. No doubt this was the one held at Union, on Deep River in Randolph county in this state; but the Methodists had been holding such meetings for several years, from necessity, as they were greatly scattered and had only a few houses of worship.

About this time there were quite a number of union meetings held, participated in by the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists. One of the first of such meetings was the one held at Union, on Deep River in Randolph county. It was held the last week of December, 1801.¹ Peter Claywell says his father and mother joined the Methodists in Virginia and moved to North Carolina in 1800 and settled near Snow Creek in Iredell county. He opened his house for preaching, Daniel Asbury preaching there regularly during 1801 and 1802. This was the beginning of Snow Creek Church, which appears on the records of the Yadkin Circuit in 1802 as Claywell's. The son of Peter Claywell was about ninety years old when he wrote a letter in 1876, in which he says: "This year, 1801, the news came to Iredell that the Methodists were going to hold a camp meeting in Randolph county, which was a novel idea to Presbyterians. However, James Sharpe fixed up a four-horse wagon and took his own family, and went to the camp meeting in Randolph county. And when they came back, they came with a new religion; and from that the fire began to spread. There was preaching or prayer meeting nearly every night in the week at some of the neighboring houses."² It is further stated that the revival continued for several years. In their meetings they would pray to the "God of Randolph."

Dr. Foote, in his "Sketches of North Carolina," gives

¹James Needham, who lived to be nearly a hundred years old, said it began on Christmas day, 1801. Peter Claywell, who lived to be very old, said it was in 1801. Dr. Foote says it was held the first week in January, 1802.

²Manuscript letter written to Dr. M. L. Wood in 1876.

a very vivid description of this meeting. He says that it was appointed by Dr. David Caldwell, of Guilford, and that he had invited his brethren west of the Yadkin to attend; and that four of their ministers and about a hundred of their people accepted the invitation. Dr. McCorkle, of Rowan; Rev. L. F. Wilson, of Iredell; J. D. Kilpatrick, of Third Creek; and Dr. James Hall, attended. The preachers reached the ground on Friday and took part in the services. Dr. Hall's people got within five miles of the place of meeting on Friday evening, and then became very much exercised, all becoming more or less affected. They could not understand the bodily exercises, by some called "the jerks," which attended these meetings. But they soon became satisfied that the excitement was a revival of true religion. And before their return home more than nine-tenths of them were deeply impressed with a sense of the great importance of salvation.¹ [Dr. Hall said that since the Randolph meeting religion had made rapid progress among his people, and that there was not an opposer among them; and that there were only two denominations that claimed the Christian name that opposed the work.

When the people of Iredell returned from the Randolph meeting they had the revival spirit, they talked of the meeting, sang the revival songs, until there was a general desire for a similar meeting nearer home. So in about a month, or the last week in January, 1802, there was a general, or union, meeting held near Statesville. "The

¹Foote's "Sketches of North Carolina," New York, 1846, page 383.

number of wagons which came to the ground, besides riding carriages, was about one hundred and eight." The number attending on Sunday was about four thousand. Soon after the service opened on Friday, the rain began to fall, and continued until near night. Great interest prevailed. The sleet began to fall next morning, then snow and rain, which continued until late in the afternoon; "and the day was without exception the most inclement of any during the whole winter." Yet the people of all ages and sexes stood there exposed deeply affected, and hundreds were converted. There were two Methodist preachers, one Baptist, and several Presbyterians. Rev. Philip Bruce, presiding elder on the Richmond District, but who found time to do much work in North Carolina, writes of this meeting in June, 1802, saying: "The Presbyterian preachers in Iredell county were in favor of the work, and invited me to assist them at a sacramental occasion, to be held by encampment near Statesville about the middle of February, 1802.¹ They met at the time and place appointed. On Friday there were present seven or eight Presbyterian ministers.

"From Saturday till Tuesday ten o'clock, the cries of the wounded, and singing, continued without intermission; near one hundred were apparently under the operations of grace at a time. But it was not possible to ascertain the number that found peace and deliverance; the probability is, if the meeting had continued longer the consequence would have been wonderful.

¹In the date there is a little conflict between Bruce and Foote's "Sketches of North Carolina." The latter says the last week in January.

"The public congregation was dismissed at ten o'clock on Tuesday. It was a common circumstance for companies to retire from the camp for private devotion, and some of them to be struck down in the woods, and for single persons when thus retired to alarm their friends in the camp with their cries. On Monday evening numbers left the camp, and I suppose not more than three or four hundred remained.

"I agreed to continue with them, as did two or three other ministers; I told some of the mourners if they would come to the tent where I was, I would spend the whole night with them in prayer. Soon after they came together, a young man told us that he, with his companions, had left the camp in the morning and went to a whisky house; and while one of the company was blaspheming, he was struck with such dread and horror that he quit his wicked companions and returned to the camp and joined in with the first praying company he met with, and the Lord manifested his pardoning love to his soul. This simple relation had the most surprising effect on the congregation. A young woman who was taking some refreshment cried out that she was feasting her body, and her poor soul was in danger of perishing to all eternity. The cry for mercy became general throughout our large tent, and fifteen or sixteen rose before morning, shouting, praising, and giving glory to God for pardoning mercy; at the same time the work was being carried on in the other tents. Through the course of the meeting many old professors, who had been in full communion for years in the regular congregations, were stripped of the garments

of their own making and cast away their old religion, as it was termed, and, with repenting publicans, began to cry aloud for mercy, until they had found the sinner's Friend. After this meeting was dismissed, some were found by the wayside, others were struck in the wagons; some returned home praising and shouting, others crying for mercy. This may serve as a sample of the work that God is carrying on in this once abandoned part of the country, where thirty years ago a living minister and a living Christian could scarcely be found; now there are scores of ministers and hundreds of Christians."¹ Two weeks after this meeting another was held near Morganton. Dr. Foote says, "The country there is thinly inhabited and the professors of religion few in number." The meeting was well attended, considering the condition of the country.

[By this time the whole country was in a state of great excitement over the demonstrations witnessed in these meetings. It was the subject of conversation. The people in North Carolina were stirred on the subject of religion as they had never been before or since. Another meeting had been appointed for the second week in March at the Shepherd's Cross Roads in the southern part of Iredel county. This was the best attended of any meeting up to that time. "The number of wagons, besides riding carriages, was two hundred and sixty-two. [The meeting continued from Friday until Tuesday.] Hundreds were crying aloud for mercy. There were four places of worship, and the number attending on Sunday was estimated

¹"Extracts of Letters of the Preachers," 1805, pages 37-39.

to be eight or ten thousand." These meetings continued for days and nights without cessation. It must be remembered that the country was thinly settled, and that a congregation of a thousand meant much then.

✓ The first camp meeting held in Rutherford county was in 1802, about eight miles from the courthouse. Rev. James Jenkins says: "The same power attended the meeting; thousands were present; many poor sinners felt the power of God, and were raised up to testify that he had forgiven their sins." Thomas L. Douglass, Daniel Asbury, and several Presbyterian ministers were present. The Methodists had another camp meeting at the Hanging Rock. ✓ Fifteen ministers and about three thousand people were present. The work began on Friday night. The preachers were singing, praying, or preaching all night. "Saturday evening it began again at the stand. Sabbath evening, at the close of the sacrament, some fell to the earth, and the exercises continued the whole night. Monday morning the people came together again and began singing and exhorting: the Lord wrought again, and this was the greatest time. They were crying for ✓ mercy on all sides."¹

✓ There was another camp meeting in 1802 held at Scarborough's meetinghouse in Little Pee Dee Circuit. This church is known now as Zion; it is near Mount Gilead in Montgomery county. In the Quarterly Conference held in connection with the camp meeting, they unanimously asked that Rev. James Jenkins preach on the subject of

¹"Extracts of Letters of the Preachers," 1805, page 29.

baptism, and as a result Rev. Thomas Nelson, the pastor, baptized thirty adults on his next round, some of them having been raised Quakers and some Baptists.¹ Henry Ledbetter preached one night after most of the preachers had retired, and six or seven persons professed religion. There was present at this meeting a preacher who created a great deal of disturbance by holding controversies about through the grounds, until Rev. James Jenkins, the presiding elder, told him he ought to quit preaching or quit getting drunk. He asked when he had been drunk? "A brother standing by said, 'I saw you coming from the courthouse drunk the other day.' He became silent, and interrupted no more."

Another camp meeting was held soon afterwards at Town Creek near Wilmington. Here the rain interfered greatly with the success of the meeting, as the tents would not keep out the rain. Many became discouraged and left. The tents at that day were very rude constructions. The plan was in its infancy, so there was no proper method of constructing tents. Some were made of cloth; "others were shelters covered with pine bark,"—none of which would keep out the rain. None of them were large enough to hold public worship. Little was accomplished until Sunday morning, when the interest started early and continued all day. Many souls were saved. In later years the tents were more substantial, and were built on a larger scale; while the great arbor was erected and seats arranged where thousands could assemble and hear the

¹"Life of James Jenkins," page 119.

preaching. With these improvements, the weather did not interfere to any great extent with the services.

✓ By 1803 camp meetings had become very popular. They were held in almost every circuit. The presiding elder was the leader. During 1802 and 1803 James Jenkins was presiding elder over all that territory in North Carolina belonging to the South Carolina Conference. He was "tall and commanding in person, with a face, even in old age, expressive of great energy and courage, and a voice, until impaired by long use, clear and trumpet-toned." He was often called "Thundering Jimmy." He was watchful over the young preachers, and was always ready to correct in them what he conceived to be errors. He did this until he was styled by the preachers "the currycomb of the Conference." [During the year 1803 he attended a camp meeting at Spedsborough, in the Pee Dee Circuit, now Rockingham. Here he reprov'd a negro speculator, and the man took him out in company with his friends to speak to him. He told Jenkins he had heard some bad things about him. "Ah, indeed!" said Jenkins, "if you are searching for evil reports against me, perhaps I could help you out." Continuing he said, "If you will go to a certain town in North Carolina, you may hear that I have a wife and two children; and then you can go down on Edisto and they will tell you I stole a bell." Notwithstanding the opposition that he met with here he had a good meeting, and the Lord wonderfully blessed preacher and people.

He held another camp meeting this year on Town Creek, Bladen Circuit, near Wilmington. This surpassed

all preceding ones on the district for the display of divine power. It attracted the people of Wilmington, and from miles around in every direction. The presiding elder preached on Sunday from the text, "Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near me, I pray you." Before he had finished, the shouts and cries of the people completely drowned his voice. The people from Wilmington were greatly amazed and deeply impressed. General Howe's son, an infidel, attended the meeting one evening, and "was very uneasy"; and as soon as he could see the road next morning, he left. "But the arrows of the Almighty had fastened in his heart; he prayed, and his cry was, 'If Christ be God, let me be convinced.' In a short time he had such a view of Christ crucified that he lost his infidelity and sins together, and became a happy, rejoicing believer. He and his wife were now reunited in peace." Samuel Richardson professed religion at this meeting, and at once became very zealous, talking to the mourners and praying for them. This was the rule among the converts; as soon as they were converted, whether old or young, they turned preachers and commenced talking to others. The fruits of Richardson's conversion did not stop at the meeting; he was filled with the Holy Spirit, shouting "Glory to God!" He told his wife what the Lord had done for him, and the Spirit pierced her heart, and she at once began to call for mercy. The servants came in to see what was the matter, and they all got down and remained until they obtained pardon. He did not stop here, but began to hold prayer meetings, and by the time the presiding elder reached Mr. Richardson's neigh-

borhood, on his next round, fifty-two had professed religion. This camp meeting was a great blessing to the surrounding country, and especially to the town of Wilmington. Here its influence resulted in no less than seventy happy conversions.

They had another meeting on the Bladen Circuit, about ten miles from Wilmington, in June, 1804, when there was a great display of divine power. At another meeting in Bladen, near Gantie's, there were ten preachers and about sixteen hundred people. This was the greatest of all the meetings in the Cape Fear section. "Many sinners fell, under a sense of guilt and danger, and cried aloud, as if in the agonies of death. Many praised God for pardoning love. All souls were made subjects of the work, rich and poor—from the hoary-headed sinner to children nine years old. Many sinners had to fly from the ground, or fall under the power of God." Here about a hundred found the Lord.

In 1802 camp meetings were introduced in several places in the Yadkin valley. During the year 1801 there was one near Snow Creek Church, in Iredell county. Such meetings were held here almost annually for nearly a hundred years. The preaching place was at Peter Claywell's. The church which grew out of it was Snow Creek. The first camp meeting was attended by such men as Jonathan Jackson, presiding elder on the Newbern District, Philip Bruce, and Joseph Moore. "Jonathan Jackson was a powerful" preacher, says Peter Claywell,¹ writing

¹Letter written by Peter Claywell at the age of ninety, dated 1876.

of him in 1876. He tells of another meeting held in 1803 at Trumpet Branch, near where Moss's meeting-house now stands. Dr. Hall, Presbyterian, attended this meeting. Dr. Peter Doub, in his Autobiography, tells of a camp meeting held on his father's land in 1802, in which he was very powerfully impressed, but being so young he was not encouraged to seek religion. He says that from this time on these meetings "multiplied and extended throughout Virginia, North and South Carolina. They were attended by immense multitudes of people, and were productive of a vast amount of good. In those primitive times of camp meetings the people assembled for purposes of worship, and seemed to be wholly absorbed in the exercises of the occasion. Parade and show were then utter strangers on such occasions. All seemed to be devoted to preaching, and singing and prayer. Many were the seals of the ministry in those days; and great will be their crowns of rejoicing in eternity."¹

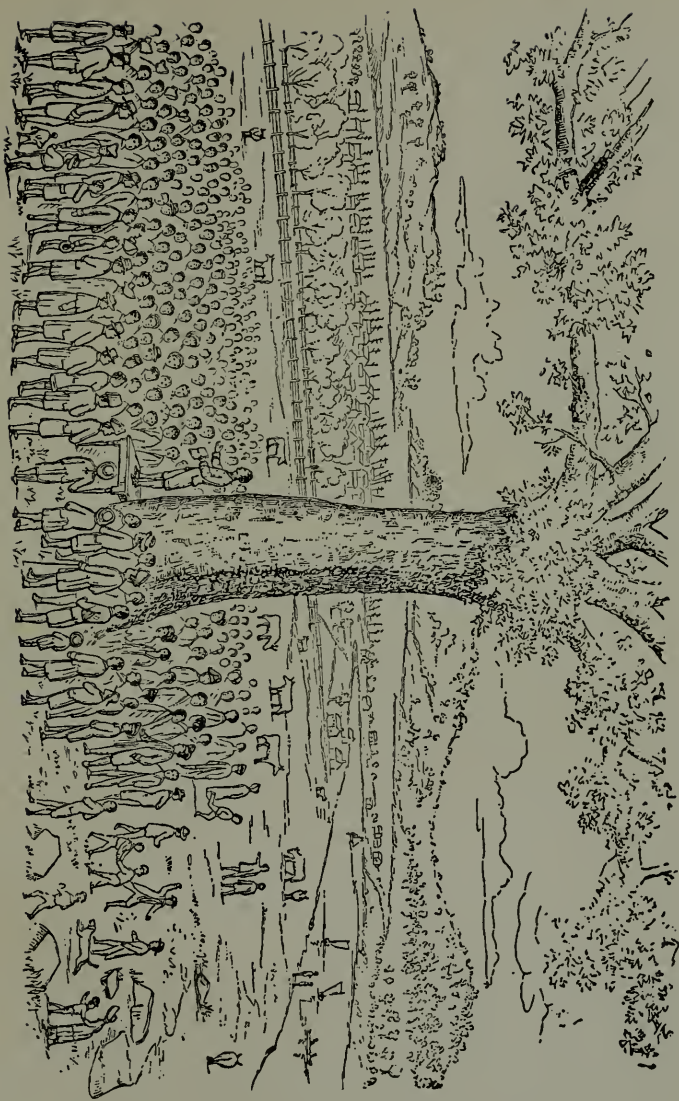
In order to show that these meetings were generally held over the state, early in the century, we quote from a letter written by Jonathan Jackson, presiding elder on the Newbern District, to show something of what was going on in that part of the state. He says: "The greatest times we have had have been at our camp meetings. Great pains have been used to prevent irregularities and disorder, which has so far won the hearts of the people to them that they want camp meetings almost everywhere. It is impossible to tell the good which has been done at them; for while some have been crying for mercy, others shout-

¹"Memoir of Peter Doub," written by himself, manuscript.

ing the praises of the Most High, there would not be a sinner found who would open his mouth against the work. At the first camp meeting I suppose there were twenty-seven converted, several at the second and third, about ten at the fourth, and about sixty-seven at the last, which was held in my district. In the lower part of the district we have had the greatest seasons that have ever been seen; and I hope the work will go on and prosper."¹

These camp meetings and the great revival that swept over North Carolina came simultaneously. The results achieved could not have been had without an encampment, from the fact that the country was so sparsely settled. These meetings brought together large congregations and helped to concentrate public thought upon religion. The meetings became the topic of conversation. In the great revival of this period thousands were brought into the Church. We have seen the multitude assembled in the woods, singing and praying, preaching and exhorting, for days and nights without cessation. The encampments were lighted at night with pine torches here and there in the grove, while the stars looked down from above the trees. All night the groans of the penitents agonizing for pardon and the shouts of the saints could be heard. Those were happy seasons, and such hallowed scenes belong only to the early history of Methodism. There may be objections to them now, but nothing could take their place when Methodism was being introduced into the sparsely settled districts of North Carolina.

¹"Extracts of Letters of the Preachers," 1805, page 84.



PREACHING IN THE WOODS.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOILS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE PIONEERS.

Spirit of Heroism. Little is Known of Many of These Heroes—Gathering up Fragments of Their History. Asbury's Journal—His Prophecy. Preparation of the Pioneers—Their Style of Preaching. Robert Williams in Norfolk. Dr. Kilgo's Estimate of the Itinerants—Their Immense Work. Large Fields—District Reaching from French Broad to Mattamuskeet. Circuit Preachers on the Go all the Time—Their Hardships—Privations—Often Cold and Hungry—Their "Record is on High"—What They Have Accomplished in North Carolina—Twenty-two Circuits—Over Eleven Thousand Members—Furnished Much for the Whole Church.

No set of men known in all history have shown the heroic spirit more than the early pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina. They possessed every element of the heroic. They braved dangers, endured hardships and privations, labored and fought in many a conflict, and finally triumphed gloriously.

It has been our purpose in these pages to describe the scenes and labors of the pioneers of early Methodism in North Carolina, and to gather up and garner the fruits of their toils and sacrifices. But how little we know of many of these dead heroes! Who knows where their precious ashes repose? "Who can paint the dangers that surrounded their pathways, or depict the somber, threatening skies that lowered over them? Who can delineate the bows of promise that arched the storms that beat upon them, or give a voice to the thunders that pealed above

and around them? Who can mingle in the joys that filled their overflowing cups, or measure the faith and the courage that swelled their heroic breasts?" Who can tell of the friends who wiped the death sweat from their brows, and went with them to the brink of that river that separates us from the heavenly land?

Of course we do not feel competent to do justice to the least of these dead heroes; but if we have succeeded in gathering from the fragments of the history that is left of them, and again embalming their memories for this generation and those that are to come, it will have been a pleasing task. Their examples should be emulated, but cannot be, for they are not known. Let us walk with them, and learn of them as they learned of Christ. The lamented Dr. N. F. Reid, never uttered a more eloquent and beautiful sentiment than when, in speaking of these pioneers, he said: "God bless the memory of our fathers and breathe their spirit on us! The most sacred walks on this continent are their circuit paths, the holiest spots are the repositories where they have been laid in their last sleep, the loveliest flowers seen by mortals are those that bloom above their graves, symbols of their brighter glory."

Bishop Asbury's Journal reveals more concerning the toils, hardships, and difficulties endured by the pioneers than any other work extant. In speaking of his Journal, he makes this comment and prophecy: "I have well considered my Journal; it is inelegant, yet it conveys much information of the state of the religion and country. I make no doubt the Methodists are, and will be, a numerous and wealthy people, and their preachers who follow

us will not know our struggles but by comparing the present improved state of the country with what it was in our day, as exhibited in my Journal and other records of that day." His Journal is of incomparable value, and his prophecy has been fulfilled. Asbury stands chief among the Methodist pioneers. He visited North Carolina once or twice a year for a number of years, superintending the work, preaching and holding Conferences. In his Journal he recounts many hardships and trying experiences. He was regarded as the leader in this movement. In the previous chapters a number of less prominent pioneers have been noticed. For want of data, little is said about many of them. In discussing them as a class, let us notice,

I. THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE WORK.

This pioneer work required a type of manhood which could meet much physical endurance. A young man reared in luxury and ease, however well prepared otherwise, was not suited to the hardships incident to the life of an itinerant preacher. Daniel Asbury while with the Indians in captivity received a preparation for the itinerant ministry that he could not have obtained anywhere else. He learned something of the side of life which he frequently met in after years. He knew how to endure hardships, and live on a rough diet, that would have driven others without such preparation to the local ranks. It was more necessary for them to know how to live on the salary paid than it was for them to be able to read the original in Hebrew and Greek. At the first, if they were paid in full, they received only sixty-four dollars a year.

The man who could not measure his wants by this sum was not a suitable person for the itinerancy, however well he might have been qualified in other respects. So there were qualifications at that day, as there are to-day, that cannot be conferred upon an individual by any college.

According to our standards of an education at the present, very few of the early pioneers of Methodism would have been considered educated. And yet where could a set of men be found who were better qualified for the work in hand than those who planted Methodism in North Carolina? Of course they did not have the educational advantages that we claim for our preachers of to-day. But they did have the power of an eloquence that swayed the multitudes and brought souls to Christ. There were no theological colleges, more than what was known as the "Brush College"—that is, large circuits where the Conference broke in its young preachers. Upon such laborious fields many of our most prominent preachers took their first lessons in the itinerancy. Here, amid the dense forests and flowing streams, the itinerant pored over his books on horseback as he traveled to distant appointments; and here, amid the deep glens and craggy mountains, the preacher often caught the sublimest inspirations. In those long rides across the plains of the east, of the mountains of the west, amid the solitudes of the forest, he had time to commune with nature and to meditate upon those great truths that he had been called to proclaim. This was his school room, with all nature to teach him. To do more study than this, he had no time. His books were few. His Bible and Discipline were his principal books. And as

John Bunyan in Bedford jail, shut up with his old Bible and Concordance, was enabled to map out the path of life and picture the glories of heaven and gloom of hell with a vividness that made them seem real, so these men of God, confined to the little library which they carried in their saddlebags as they traversed the lonely paths through dense forests, received inspirations from God and his Book that made their words cut like two-edged swords. They did not deal in metaphysical speculation or lose themselves in the fogs of philosophy; but bathing their vision in the eternal sunshine of truth, they came into the pulpit, like Moses from the burning mountain, full of love and radiant with glory.

These itinerants preached with an oratory that was peculiar to the Wesleyan movement. It originated with George Whitefield. He and those connected with Wesley in England and America revolutionized the prevalent style of preaching. They had a message from God; and they realized the "woe" that was pronounced upon them if they did not deliver it. With a burning conviction that their message was one of truth, they took their lives in their hands and went everywhere to declare it. Then the love of Christ constrained them to go and preach, and suffer for him. Their preaching was for immediate results. With prophetic eye they saw the future doom of the lost soul, and its only way of refuge. Hence they preached with great earnestness, and with a zeal that was new to the people of America.

An instance of this is seen in the visit of Robert Williams to Norfolk in the year 1772. When he entered the

town, "without any previous notice being given, he went to the courthouse, and standing on the steps of the door, and beginning to sing, the people collected together; and after prayer, he took his text and preached to a considerable number of hearers, who were very disorderly, as they all thought the preacher was a madman; and while he was preaching the people were laughing, talking, and walking about in all directions. The general conclusion was, that they had never heard such a man before; for, they said, sometimes he would preach, then he would pray, then he would swear, and at times he would cry. The people were so little used to hearing a preacher say 'hell,' or 'devil,' in preaching, that they thought he was swearing, when he told them about going to hell, or being damned, if they died in their sins. As he was believed to be a madman, none of them invited him to their houses. However, he preached at the same place the next day, when they had found out he was not insane, and they were glad to get him to their houses." Williams was one of the pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina, and organized the first society there.

Dr. J. C. Kilgo, in speaking of the itinerant preacher, in his fraternal address before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1904, says: "What a mighty man the itinerant was! Free from pompous pretense, unheralded by the blast of trumpets, lacking the credentials of earthly courts, without the equipage of wealth, not certified by lordly society, this man, the Methodist circuit rider, stands the peer of any man or set of men who helped to build this republic. The desire and expectation

of worldly gain did not mar his motives. He had no wish for social applause, he sought no indulgence at the hands of patronizing luxury, and did not crave personal comforts; but, like a man upon whom rested the prophetic commission of the eternal throne, he went to his task as one bent on a desperate mission. Serenity was on his face, a heavenly radiance was in his eye, the tone of eternal authority was in his voice, and the strength of a divine inspiration steadied his step. He obeyed the behest of Heaven and went everywhere, threading tangled wildernesses, climbing over wild mountains, and penetrating dense swamps; and wherever he went he delivered the word of God with miraculous power. He did not peddle indulgence to sensuous society, he made no concessions to popular evils, he softened no word of truth in order to promote his personal comfort, nor was he a mendicant of any kind of worldly favors. He was a 'prophet sent of God,' and the tone of Sinaitic thunder was in his words while he waged unceasing war against sin in all places. He arbitrated no differences between righteousness and sin, God and Satan, but proclaimed an eternal antagonism between them never to be adjusted by any other method than by the everlasting defeat of evil. He has left his record in an eternally established boundary between truth and falsehood, righteousness and sin, a boundary which ecclesiastical diplomats of these last times seem to think extends far beyond the property rights of God, and should be drawn in to suit the convenience and commerce of Satan."

II. THE VASTNESS AND CHARACTER OF THE FIELD.

Their work will be seen by a glance at the fields they occupied. If presiding elder, his district extended from the mountains to the sea; for at one time a presiding elder had in his district nearly all of North Carolina, only two circuits and parts of one or two others being in another district. On the west was the French Broad Circuit, and on the east Mattamuskeet. That territory gives us a fair idea of the work of a presiding elder. To travel such a district with few and rough roads was no easy task.

The circuit preacher fared little better, if any. His circuit was large enough to keep him on the go all the time, except stopping occasionally to have washing done. There were usually certain places on the circuit which were known as the preachers' homes. Here the itinerant would keep his books and any extra clothing he might have. At these points he would make a little halt, but otherwise he was continually going, preaching once and twice a day, and visiting the flock. A circuit then was often as large as one of our districts now. It was impossible for him to have any home more than that mentioned above. If he married and selected a home, it became at once necessary for him to locate. And every year many of these noble men, worn out in body, felt the necessity of stopping and resting for a few years. He could not go to his appointments on Saturday and return Monday or Tuesday, and rest in the quiet of his own home.

Such labor wrecked many of those old heroes. With our conveniences, we can hardly realize how they survived as long as they did. When a pioneer went to his new field,

there were no warm fires, and well-filled larders, and encouraging friends to meet him. Such was the experience of Robert Williams in Norfolk, with no one to invite him home with him. It was similar with Enoch George on the head waters of the Catawba, where the persecutions were so great that he hesitated to tell that he was a Methodist preacher; and with Jesse Richardson, when, after traveling all day in the snow and cold, dark overtaking him while still twelve miles from his destination, he was refused, for a long time, even admittance to the fire in the little log cabin. But after sitting on the doorsteps and singing several hymns, the hard-hearted man finally softened a little and permitted him to sit by the fire the remainder of the night. Next morning, without breakfast for man or beast, he pushed his way across the mountain eighteen inches deep in snow, twelve miles for breakfast, and then on to his appointment. Such was their faithfulness in filling their appointments in the wide territory of their circuits that "of a bitterly cold winter it became almost a proverbial saying, 'There is nothing out to-day but crows and Methodist preachers.'"¹

Asbury was not only the leader in pioneer life, but he was foremost in braving hardship, toil, and peril. In 1788 he crossed the Alleghany Mountains, as he did fifty-eight times in thirty years, and says: "Our course lay over mountains and through valleys, and the mud and mire were such as might scarcely be expected in December. We came to an old forsaken habitation. Here our horses

¹Raybold's "Annals of Methodism."

grazed about while we broiled our meat. Midnight brought us up at Jones's after riding forty, or perhaps fifty, miles. The old man, our host, was kind enough to wake us up at four o'clock in the morning. We journeyed on through devious, lonely wilds, where no food might be found, except what grew in the woods or was carried with us."

On another occasion he says: "I have slept in the woods without necessary food or raiment. In the Southern states I have waded swamps, and led my horse for miles, where I took colds that brought on the diseases which are now preying on my system, and must soon terminate in death. But my mind is still the same—that it is through the merits of Christ that I am to be saved."¹

These quotations are made for the reason that what Asbury suffered others suffered, they all being in the same work and traveling over the same territory; the only difference being, if there was any difference shown it was shown to the bishop. He recorded his experiences to some extent, and the other preachers did not record theirs. He says: "One day, as I was traveling, I heard a loud human voice, and a prodigious noise, like a horse running. I ran into a safe place and hid myself, and saw a company of Indians pass by, furiously driving a gang of horses which they had stolen from the white people. I had nothing to subsist upon but roots, young grapevines, and sweet cane, and such like produce of the woods. I accidentally came where a bear was eating a deer, and drew near in hopes of

¹*Christian Advocate and Journal*, New York, April 17, 1829.

getting some; but he growled and looked angry, so I left him, and quickly passed on. At night when I lay down to rest, I never slept, but I dreamed of eating. In my lonesome travels, I came to a very large shelving rock, under which was a pine bed of leaves. I crept in among them, and determined there to end my days of sorrow. I lay there several hours, until my bones ached in so distressing a manner that I was obliged to stir out again. I then thought of, and wished for, home; and traveled on several days, till I came where Cumberland River breaks through the mountain.”¹

The preachers frequently suffered through want of clothing. We have noticed where Thomas Ware complained about his clothes being worn out, and no money to buy more. When James Jenkins was on the Bladen Circuit, then extending throughout the Cape Fear section, he makes this note: “In the fall I took the fever, and had to stop one day to take medicine, but got my appointment filled. The next day I rode with the fever on me. I suffered some this year, but had much comfort and prosperity in my soul. Here the homespun coat, which my mother gave me, wore out, so much so that I lost one sleeve from the elbow down; but rather than lose time to go and obtain a new one, I went on round the circuit sleeveless in one arm, until a brother exchanged with me, giving me the best of the bargain.”²

These pioneers faced dangers and endured hardships scarcely credible by those who have been reared in the

¹Asbury's Journal, Vol. II., page 300.

²“Memoirs of Jenkins,” page 87.

“silver age of Methodism.” They were often forced to subsist solely on cucumbers, or a piece of cold bread, without the luxury of milk or coffee. In many sections of the state, where they were entertained, the ordinary diet was fried bacon and corn bread. The houses were rude log cabins, with earthen floors. The beds upon which Bishop Asbury and his coadjutors often slept were constructed of “clapboards laid on poles supported by rude forks driven into the ground.”

But this is sufficient to show that these were heroes in every sense of the word. And look what a list there is of them! Besides many whose names are forgotten, there are Asbury, Coke, Pilmoor, Williams, Rankin, Garrettson, Dromgoole, Poythress, Tatum, King, Dickins, Cole, Pride, O’Kelly, Yeargan, Ellis, Ivey, John Easter, Jesse Lee, Tunnell, Bruce, Hull, John McGee, William Ormond, James Jenkins, Douthet, Nolley, Jackson, Daniel Asbury, with a host of others whose names might be mentioned.

It would be a pleasure to dwell at some length upon these and many others who have been eminent in their self-sacrificing efforts in North Carolina; but we must reluctantly pass them by with the consoling thought that their “record is on high,” and that “their works do follow them.” It is impossible for the writer properly to embalm the memory of their names in the hearts of their successors; much of what they were and what they did has been lost to memory; but enough of their deeds and the results of their labors are here to preserve them forever as some of the greatest heroes the world has ever known.

I would that we could get a clear conception of these

men and their work in our minds, so that it could not be obliterated. Let the mind go back for a hundred and twenty-five years, and see the familiar figures on the highways of the country, known to all as the itinerant Methodist preachers. Look at the grave, earnest countenance, "the straight-breasted coat, the oil-skin covering of the hat, the leather saddlebag, and the staid gait of the horse, which denoted the Methodist preacher; and usually they were recognized by all that ever beheld or heard of one about as far as they were to be seen." This is a picture of the early itinerant as he traversed the wilds of North Carolina, with a message of salvation to every man. He was despised by some and persecuted by others, but "none of these things moved him."

"In the long and varying and shifting annals of the world's centuries, who have deserved better of their race than these self-sacrificing, devoted heroes? Where can we find a parallel to their labors, their toils, their dangers, their sacrifices? What blood-stained heroes in all the ages of time can stand side by side with these unknown, obscure men, and claim to be equal benefactors to the human race? Ye warriors, ye statesmen, ye paladins of chivalry, where is your claim to the honor and love of the race when set beside the unrecorded claims of these modest, self-renouncing preachers? The pages of earthly history have handed down your deeds of blood to posterity, and rendered your names and actions illustrious to future ages; *they* have sunk into obscure, unknown, and forgotten graves; but the good they did lives after them, and though man may not bestow upon them the honors due

their great deeds, yet not one of them has failed of his reward in the eyes of his great 'Taskmaster,' or will be forgotten in the day of the great reckoning."¹

We have followed these men in the swamps of eastern Carolina and over the mountains of the west, and we have seen their toils and hardships; but what did they accomplish up to the time of which we write—1805? The first circuit was formed in North Carolina thirty years ago, with three preachers appointed to serve it. During this period Methodism has spread over the whole state. We now have twenty-two circuits instead of one, with a membership, white and colored, of more than eleven thousand. In the whole Church there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand. Within North Carolina, we can have no idea as to the number of preachers who have been sent out to other parts; it is safe, however, to say that the great majority of the early preachers were furnished by North Carolina and Virginia.

These men labored under great difficulties. Soon after making a start in the state, the war cloud gathered over the country. And because of the relation of the preachers to England, many of them were greatly embarrassed. Some fled from the country, others ceased to travel. While even the leader of the band thought it necessary to retreat until the cloud of war had passed over. Yet he was full of faith and hope, and as soon as peace was restored, "Methodism girded herself for her appointed work." And the new Church began to grow more rap-

¹W. C. Doub in "Centennial of Methodism," page 40.

idly, the spirit of liberty being congenial to its development. For in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the close of the war, a favorable time and opportunity met. It began to build up in every direction. It had its dissensions, but they only purified instead of corrupting; instead of scattering, they had a tendency to intensify and unite the forces. And thus the Church moved forward, under the earnest efforts of its workers, until within a quarter of a century many exclaimed in astonishment and gratitude, "What hath God wrought!"

If you would learn the secret of its success and wonderful growth, go to the last resting places of those who fought in the hot conflicts of its early history; and above their ashes recount their toils, hardships, self-sacrifices, and self-denying efforts in planting and defending Methodism. To them the Church owes a debt of gratitude which it can never pay. But such heroic devotion upon their part that has made this growth possible, and in which the whole Church rejoices to-day, demands at our hands nothing less than the same devotion and anxious solicitude, for the same object and for the same end.

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